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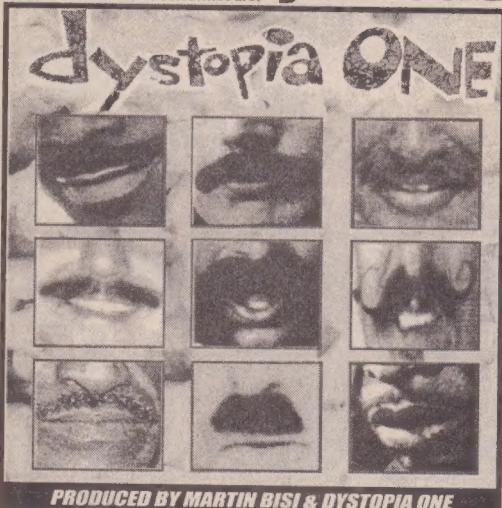
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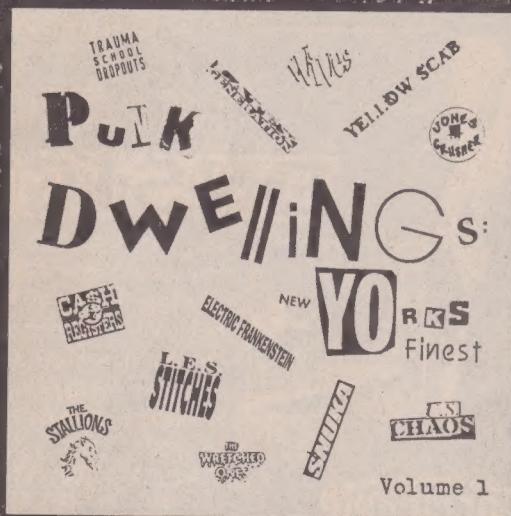
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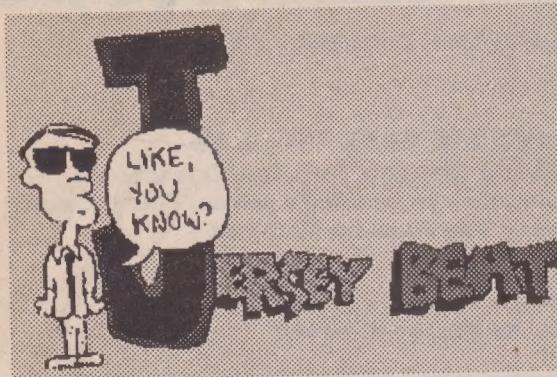
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# Jersey Beat

Issue 58 Fall/Winter 1996



## REVIEW POLICY:

"You try to play it, we try to like it."

*Jersey Beat is published whenever we feel like it, usually three times a year. We accept CD's, vinyl LP's, demo tapes, fanzines, books, and videos for review. 7 inches are reviewed in GLUT fanzine. Due to the ridiculous amount of crap that comes in the mail, we cannot guarantee a review, even if you buy a big ad or take us out to dinner. You are more than welcome to call to check up on your mailings, but I probably won't call you back unless we haven't received your package or we need more information for an article or review. If you don't hear back from us, that means it's here and we're thinking about it. If we publish a review, you'll get a tearsheet. We promise. If we want to interview your band, don't worry, we'll call you.*

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# From The Editor's Desk

Shit happens.

I realize that's hardly an original insight, it's just what's at the top of my mind as I sit here trying to come up with some sort of introduction to this issue. Since the last time I did this, we elected a President, the Yankees won the World Series, I lost a friend of many years to AIDS, and another close friend had a baby. Obla-di, obla-da, life goes on.

This New Year's Eve will mark the last show at Maxwell's booked by Todd Abramson, who's been setting up the shows there for ten years. We take a look at the turmoil at Maxwell's in this issue, and ponder what may happen there. Whatever the future brings, and whatever reservations we may have about the way Todd has treated some bands we know over the years, he has done an awesomely difficult job extremely well for a very long time. In the best of all possible worlds, Todd may end up booking a new (or existing) club in the area. Or maybe he'll devote himself to his record label. Or maybe he'll try something completely new. Whatever happens, Todd has my sincere thanks and best wishes, and if you've ever seen a show at Maxwell's (or been in a band that's played there,) he probably has yours as well.

Speaking of Maxwell's, I dropped in one night in early November to catch the Olympia, WA band Karp. I had heard great things about this band, but I was enormously disappointed. It seemed to me that the band wasn't doing anything I hadn't seen many times before - mainly screaming their lungs out and making a lot of feedback on guitar - but what bothered me even more was the almost contemptuous disregard the band seemed to have for the audience.

I've seen this a lot lately, often with some highly-touted young bands (Modest Mouse at Maxwell's was another instance that comes to mind.) It seems as if there's a new generation of bands who think that "stage presence" is some sort of fungus that needs to be avoided.

Sorry, kids, but if you get up on a stage in front of an audience that has paid to see you perform, you're a performer, whether you like it or not. This idea that you can be in a band, release records, and tour, and yet somehow *not* be an entertainer is ridiculous. It goes against generations of tradition about what it means to be in show business. There is a distinct bond that exists between a performer and audience, and it's a bond that I, for one, think should be revered and respected.

I'm not saying that you have to dress up in spangled cowboy shirts or pander to a crowd like Sammy Davis Jr. But little things like making eye contact, introducing your band (especially if you're not

that famous and in a strange city,) acknowledging an audience's applause... Since when did they become taboo?

Bands might have a little more empathy for their audience if they spent more time watching other bands, but that's another thing I've noticed. It used to be that when you went to a show - especially at Maxwell's, back when it first opened - practically everybody in the crowd was in a band themselves. Bands today don't seem to go out and support other bands very much, at least not on the local level. I sometimes get the feeling that a lot of them don't even like listening to live music all that much, unless it's their own band on stage.

I was forcibly reminded of this when some friends of mine from Wilmington, NC came up to New York to play a CMJ showcase. After watching a few of the opening bands, these guys were visibly upset. "New York bands sure don't respect one another," one of them noted. "I can't believe how bands up here act on stage."

He was talking about simple courtesy, like thanking the other bands on the bill, or not loading equipment in or out while another band is playing. Of course, in New York - where bands often wind up playing with nine other acts at hellholes like CBGB or the Spiral - that kind of courtesy is simply impossible. But even at Maxwell's, where there are only two or three bands a night, a lot of local bands don't respect the other acts on the bill. It's sad, really. And it wasn't always like that. If bands can't respect one another, how do they expect to get any respect from the public?

Happily, while all this certainly seems true in Hoboken and Manhattan, it's not true everywhere. In New Brunswick, for instance, Court Tavern shows are usually filled with people from other local bands in the crowd. And from what I've seen, the same sort of camaraderie exists in the Jersey shore scene too.

So that's the message for this issue. If you're in a band, think about what you're doing on stage and how you're treating the people who come to see you. And try to think a little about the other bands you're playing with. Shit happens, and things keep changing, sure. But who says we can't make them change for the better?

- Jim Testa





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## *Editorial*

# Good To The Last Drop?

Maxwell's has been such an important part of the New Jersey/New York music scene for so long that a lot of people - myself included - can't imagine a world where it doesn't exist. It's not a very big place - the back room only holds about 200 people - but the list of acts who have performed there reads like a Who's Who of the last 20 years of popular music, from R.E.M. and Husker Du to Henry Rollins, Fugazi, and ALL.

But nothing lasts forever, and recently, Maxwell's has seen a lot of changes, most of which suggest that the days of America's coolest rock club are drawing to an end. Unfortunately, for every fact, there's been a dozen different rumors - most of them dead-wrong and, sadly, a lot of them repeated by people who ought to know better (like the managing editor of Jersey's biggest weekly music paper.)

Since I've been besieged by requests for information about what's going on at Maxwell's, here's a quick rundown of what's true, followed by my best guesses about what all this means:

**Fact:** Maxwell's consists of a restaurant and bar, along with a backroom where bands play. Because of its restaurant license, Maxwell's has been immune to the "Over 21" restrictions placed on most live music clubs with liquor licenses and shows there have always been open to all ages.

**Fact:** Despite its fame, Maxwell's backroom has never been hugely profitable. The room has always been run so that most of the money from the door (usually a \$6 cover) goes to the bands. The club has always subsisted on the profits from the bar and the restaurant.

**Fact:** In 1995, Maxwell's original owner Steve Fallon sold the club to NJ businessman Bill Sutton. The sale came with the proviso that Fallon could veto any resale of the club (say, for instance, to Bennigan's or some other restaurant chain.) At the same time, Sutton gave Todd Abramson - who has booked bands at the club since 1985 - a guaranteed two year contract to continue the same basic booking policy. Thus, it seemed as if the "old" Maxwell's would continue for at least two more years.

**Fact:** Sutton, looking to increase profits in the front of the club - composed of a bar and restaurant - announced plans to turn Maxwell's into a microbrew, featuring its own brand of "Maxwell's" beers.

**Fact:** In early September, 1996, during the CMJ Convention, a small grease fire grew out of control and completely destroyed Maxwell's kitchen, also damaging the women's restroom and part of the back room. The restroom and backroom wall were quickly repaired and the club reopened in less than a week. However, it was discovered that it would take months to rebuild and reopen the kitchen before Maxwell's could serve food again.

**Fact:** In November, 1996, faced with a huge loss of revenue because of the kitchen fire, and with a big investment in the microbrew, Sutton decided he needed to increase profits. He hired a new day manager for the restaurant/bar, one whose resume' included a stint at The Zoo Lounge, a go-go bar in the nearby Weehawken Shades. Several senior staff members were demoted or dismissed.

**Fact:** Distressed by the change of personnel, Todd Abramson announced he would leave Maxwell's on December 31, 1996. Sutton agreed to let him out of the second year of his contract. Night manager Andrea Harbison, in protest over the changes in staff, quit immediately.

**Fact:** In an interview with *The Newark Star-Ledger*, owner Bill Sutton said that he would hire a new booker but that live music would continue to a staple at Maxwell's. "It might not all be alternative rock, but it wasn't all alternative rock under Todd either," Sutton said.



Sutton noted that he had just spent "\$14,000" to refurbish the backroom and beef up the sound system, so it would be foolish for him not to continue booking live music.

**Fact:** Just in time for the World Series, Maxwell's installed a color TV over front bar. (Fallon had always steadfastly refused to have a television anywhere in the club or restaurant.)

And those, so far, are the facts. The rumors have been ridiculous: Gutting the back room to install pool tables. Installing ten TV sets in the back room to turn it into a sports bar. Canceling all of the shows Todd had booked immediately. A new booking policy of nothing but cover bands. And so on.

Just as this issue was going to press, we learned that Jody Hamm, a former bartender at Maxwell's, had been hired to take Todd's place. Realistically, at this point, so many bands (and booking agents) rely on Maxwell's as a quality gig when they come to the NY area, that anyone who can answer the phone should be able to keep a steady stream of good (and profitable) acts coming into the club. If, on off nights, Sutton wants to book music that will make a little more money - he's talked publicly about cover bands and Irish drinking bands on some nights of the week - well, it's his club. He bought it, he pays the bills, and he gets to decide what goes on there. A lot will depend on how much freedom he gives Jody Hamm, and whether she will be able to convince bands that the club hasn't gone to hell in a handbasket.

What could change? Plenty -- and not just the number of chronically-hip indie-rock bands playing the place. Part of Maxwell's impeccable reputation is that the club has always treated bands fairly and with respect. That means booking no more than two or three bands a night and letting them play a full set, not cramming ten bands on the bill like CBGB's or The Spiral. And it means providing an honest count at the door, and giving most of that money to the bands. It also means providing a proficient sound man and a decent sound system. Maxwell's has been an industry hangout for ages; bands love to play there and invite record labels to come see them. But all that's contingent on the bands' ability to put on a good show there.

The new manager has been heard to say that the club doesn't need to keep its own sound man on the payroll, that the bands could be told to do their own sound. There are two fatal flaws with this theory: First, a lot of indie bands can't afford to tour with a soundman in tow; even most local bands don't have someone trained to work a

soundboard that they can bring to every show. So you'll wind up having either some untrained T-shirt hawker or, worse, someone in the band trying to engineer the sound, with a complete inability to compensate when something's too loud or too low, or the band can't hear itself in the monitors.

Andy Peters, a longtime Maxwell's soundman, adds, "Without someone from the club there watching over things, every piece of equipment in the club will be broken or stolen in two weeks." Andy adds that the very suggestion that the club doesn't need its own soundman proves that the new manager - and owner - don't have any idea of how to run a rock club. "They've never tried to run this kind of business before, and they don't know what they're doing," he says. "This new manager will run the place into the ground in six months if he gets his way."

Besides the soundman question, there's the matter of the door. Sutton has been quoted as saying that he needs to find a way to get more of the money from the backroom going to the club. That can mean only two things -- raising the cover from the usual \$6 to \$8 or \$10, or giving a smaller percentage of the take to the bands and keeping more for the club. Or, as happens all too often at some area clubs, not paying the bands at all if it's a slow night.

The other alternative would be to change Maxwell's booking policy from its current two- or three-bands-a-night to anywhere from four to six bands a night, as happens at other small area clubs (Brownies, Spiral, even Hoboken's own Love Sexy.) That would destroy Maxwell's strongest appeal, since it's one of the few clubs in the area where you don't have to sit through hours of crappy opening bands to see the headliner.

Bottom line: The Maxwell's that we all have known and loved is for all intents and purposes gone. Under Steve Fallon, Maxwell's was a rock club with a bar and restaurant. Today it's a microbrew with live music. That's a huge difference.

But that doesn't mean that what follows will necessarily be horrible... just different. Let's face it: Todd Abramson has been booking Maxwell's for ten years and any band that has tried to get a booking at Maxwell's in recent years knows that he can be grumpy at best and a total pill at his worst. That attitude is, at least in part, a

defense mechanism; it comes from having to say "no" to hundreds of bands, day after day, year after year. The fact remains that there are a lot of fine area bands who, because they weren't one of Todd's favorites, couldn't get a show at Maxwell's, even though they had more than paid their dues and deserved one. Maybe now that will change for the better.

Or maybe not. Maybe by this time next year, *all* the bands at Maxwell's will either look and sound like third-rate Bon Jovi wannabes or do a "Best Of The Doors" tribute show. We'll have to wait and see.

Just remember that at least part of this is the audience's fault. If Maxwell's had been raking in money as an alternative rock club, there wouldn't need to be any changes made. But business has been terrible. Back in the early years, you didn't go to Maxwell's because there was a good show there, you just went because it was your favorite club, and all your friends would be there, regardless of the bands. That hasn't been true for a very long time.

The market has changed; the fans change; all those old Maxwell's regulars have stopped going to shows, moved away, died, or have other things to occupy their time. Granted, I'm a geezer; I've been going to Maxwell's since 1979. So inevitably, a lot of my old friends are no longer around. But I'm a pretty good people-watcher, and when I watch the crowds at Maxwell's these days, I don't see warmth and camaraderie. I don't see hugs and handshakes, or even clusters of friends getting together. I see a room full of strangers waiting for the bands to go on. Nobody talks to one another. Nobody "hangs out" anymore. Whose fault is that? It's not Bill Sutton's.

So think about that the next time you start ranting and raving about how Maxwell's has changed. And if you really want to save what's left of the old Maxwell's vibe, then go out, support your favorite bands. Don't sneak in cheap beers under your coat (which I see people do all the time) -- support the bar. That's what makes it possible to have bands there in the first place. Don't just show up when your favorite bands are in town. Go on a Thursday just to support the local bands playing there. Hang out. Have fun. Make the place your own.

Then, and only then, can you complain about what happens next.

## ***Microbrews Reviewed: Does Maxwell's Beer Live Up To The Name?***

Maxwell's recently unveiled its first three microbrewed beers, the somewhat embarrassingly named Alternative Pale Ale, Golden Elysian Ale (named after Elysian Field, a park directly behind the club,) and Percussion Porter. In Jersey Beat's unending commitment to bring you all the news about NJ's music scene, three of us bellied up to the bar at Hoboken's fabled nightspot and sampled the new brews. Your taste experts are Jim Testa, Andy Peters, and Stroller White.

### **PERCUSSION PORTER:**

Jim: Doesn't have the creaminess you expect from a porter. Like all the beers here, it's a little too harsh and bitter. The aftertaste is almost more sour than bitter.

Andy: It's bitter going down, and it's bitter on the back of your tongue afterwards. It should have a nice finish, but it stays there. There are some beers that have an aftertaste that are very pleasant, but this one just lays there. It should be much smoother than it is.

Stroller: Good stuff. Nice, dark, rich beer, with a lingering aftertaste that just gets better with time. It's definitely the best beer of the batch.

### **GOLDEN ELYSIAN ALE:**

Jim: Horrible. This tastes like a Budweiser that somebody put their cigarette out in. Awful aftertaste.

Andy: I guess it's an ale. I don't think they have lagers here. It's a golden ale in the Molson Golden Ale tradition. If you like Molson, you'll

beers. It does have a bite, but I'm not sure they mean for it to have this much bite. It doesn't have the formaldehyde taste that a Beck's or a Heineken has. It's smoother than the porter, which is not surprising, but it's definitely modeled after Molson Golden Ale.

Stroller: It's tasty. It harks back to Hamm's or Old Bohemian, one of those 'when you're drinking more than one' kind of beers. Goes down light, doesn't fill you up. It does have kind of a flat taste, and it has an aftertaste I don't really like. Like I said, it reminds me of my Hamm's days when I used to buy beer based on how much I could get for the price rather than what it tasted like.

### **ALTERNATIVE PALE ALE**

Jim: My favorite of the three, but I wouldn't order this if I could get a Bass or a Double Diamond. It's a little too harsh. I like bitter beer, but this has almost too much bite.

Stroller: It's good, it's tasty, it's got the bite most people like, although I don't really care for it that much. It has kind of the Sam Adams vibe, that pale ale kind of thing.

Andy: The alternative to what? I'm a pale ale drinker. My favorite drink is a Bass Ale. The problem with this, like all three of the beers really, is that they're not cooked long enough. They all have too harsh a bite. Pale ales should be smoother than this. It's bitter, and it shouldn't be as bitter as it is. I tried a glass of Bass Ale and there's just no comparison. The Bass is just so much smoother. They need to tweak the

# Donny The Punk, 1946 - 1996

Donny The Punk was born Robert A. Martin Jr., a name he disliked and seldom used, on July 27, 1946. Only the government called him by his given name, like those times when he was in jail, or during his service in the Navy. Ironically, although he lived as Donny The Punk, he died as Robert Martin, in a Manhattan V.A. hospital, on July 19. He was exactly a week away from turning 50 years old.

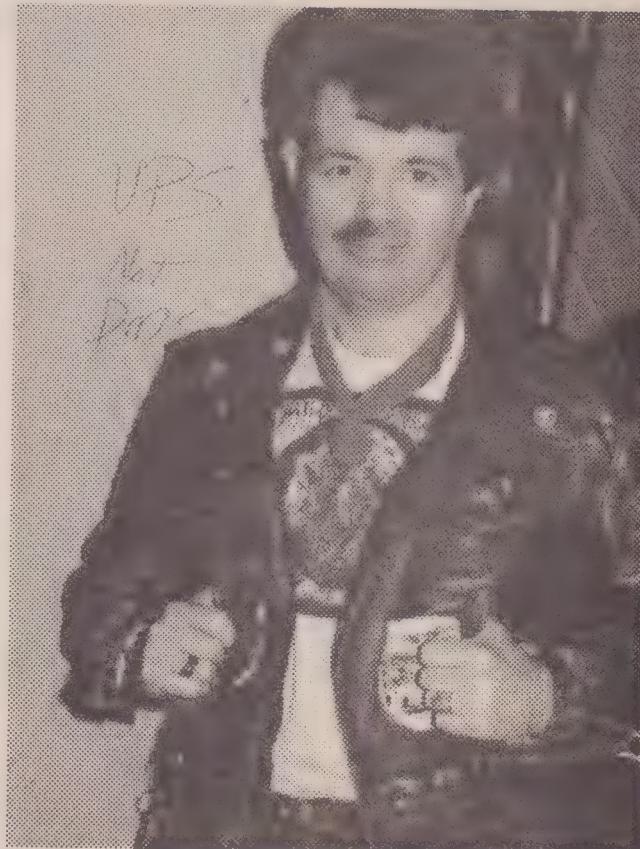
There is an old Yiddish joke about the difference between a schlemiel and a shlemazel. "If two men are eating dinner, the schlemiel is the one who spills the soup in the schlemazel's lap." Donny was a schlemazel. If there was something bad that could happen, it would happen to him. But there's another old saying: "If God gives you a lemon, make lemonade." That was Donny too. When he was 27, he was arrested during an anti-Vietnam War protest and thrown in jail, where he was the victim of a brutal gang rape. Donny never forgot the experience, but it inspired him to start a national movement dedicated to fighting prison rape. He became an internationally recognized expert and speaker on the subject, and was interviewed by Mike Wallace on *60 Minutes* about his work earlier this year. He spent years serving a long and undeserved sentence in a maximum-security federal prison... but used the experience as the inspiration for an epic poem, "Jail Is," which he frequently recited as a spoken word piece. He got himself beat up at shows more than anyone in the history of punk, but never lost his passion for hardcore.

Hard luck? Donny invented it. After his first jail term, Donny developed an interest in Buddhism and decided to violate his parole to visit India and study religion. But after just a few months abroad, he began having trouble with his eye and was diagnosed as having a detached retina. The doctors in India told him he would have to go back to the U.S. for an operation or risk losing the use of the eye, so Donny returned - now officially a fugitive - and successfully eluded the authorities for years, even while having his eye repaired in a government V.A. hospital! But the long arm of the law caught up with him a few years later. En route to a friend's house in a rural part of the country, the local sheriff arrested Donny for vagrancy - apparently the redneck didn't like the look of Donny's mohawk - and a routine ID check discovered he was a parole violator. That meant a return to federal prison for another two years.

Donny endured enormous suffering in his life, yet remained one of the most positive and upbeat people I've ever known. At various times, he declared himself a Punk, an Anarchist, a Quaker, a Buddhist, and a Skinhead, and never saw any contradiction between any of his personas. He advocated anarchism and couldn't have been more ill-used by the government, but was enormously proud of having served his country in Vietnam. He had the IQ of a genius and a membership in MENSA, but devoted his adult life to punk and hardcore, the most lowbrow of the popular arts.

These are the details of his life as I know them, based on conversations and correspondence we shared over the years: After his stint in the Navy at the tail end of the Vietnam war, Donny moved to New York, where - desperate for money - he appeared in several porn films under the stage name Stephen Donaldson (the alias he continued to use throughout his life.)

Donny discovered punk through Patti Smith's "Horses," especially the title song, about the harrowing rape of a boy and its suicidal aftermath. Shortly before the onset of Punk in 1977, Donny served a jail term in Norfolk, VA (for selling LSD) and, while a prisoner, discovered anarchism. After his release, he moved to NYC, adopting the name "Donny the Punk," and became active in the burgeoning club scene and punk-rock movement.



In 1980, after a period of extended unemployment and the onset of suicidal depression, Donny was declined treatment for what he believed to be a severe case of venereal disease by Veteran's Administration doctors, Donny went back to the V.A. hospital and held a doctor at gunpoint, demanding that he be treated. Instead of being hospitalized for what was apparently a Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome-induced nervous breakdown, Donny was arrested and charged with simple assault. A few days later, he was served with a nine-count federal indictment whose charges included assault with intent to kill and assault on a police officer. Donny maintained that the government escalated the charges against him when they checked his dossier and discovered his history as a political activist and anarchist. Donny was tried and convicted of the federal charges, and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

It was during his incarceration that we began our friendship. Donny read about Jersey Beat (probably in Maximum Rock N Roll) and wrote to ask for a copy. We became pen pals; he would write about his life in jail, and I would send him cassettes of all the new hardcore bands coming out. This was in the early Eighties. In 1984, when Donny was paroled, he was released to a halfway house on the Bowery, ironically just a couple of blocks from CBGB, the birthplace of punk. I had written Donny that when we finally met, I'd take him out to a restaurant and get him anything we wanted. So we finally met face to face, and we went to the Washington Square Diner, where Donny ordered the one thing he had been craving in prison - a milk shake with coffee ice cream.

In the mid-Eighties, at the height of the NY Hardcore scene, Donny

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put together the Alternative Press & Radio Council, a coalition of fanzines and college radio, along with a few fans. It was the only time the DIY community from the entire Greater New York area - New York City, Long Island, Jersey, and Connecticut - ever tried to work together. Things were fine in the beginning, but as the APRC's membership grew, things turned ugly and quarrelsome; the monthly meetings dragged on forever, filled with arguments and pointless debate. They were like those pointlessly quarrelsome letters in Maximum Rock N Roll come to life, with nobody ever agreeing with anybody else on what to do or the best way to do it. Yet somehow, the APRC published its own newsletter, put on benefit shows, created OPEC-SID (a free telephone service that gave weekly show information and lasted long after the APRC's demise,) and even released an album - *Mutiny On The Bowery*, a live NY/NJ/CT hardcore compilation recorded at CBGB in 1986. None of it would have happened without Donny.

In recent years, Donny discovered the Internet and became a familiar presence on Oil! and Punk newsgroups and mailing lists, while continuing to work on his Stop Prison Rape project as well as several book projects (none of which, alas, were ever published.) Over the years, he was a frequent contributor to many fanzines, including Under The Volcano, Sound Views, Flipside, Maximum Rock N Roll, and Jersey Beat. His work also appeared in Spin, and he was a staff member of the original Punk magazine back in the late Seventies. One of Donny's last acts was to align his Stop Prisoner Rape group with the ACLU's (so-far successful) lawsuit against the Communications Decency Act, which attempts to ban "indecency" on the Internet. Donny knew from experience that the authorities, given the power, would use any opportunity to squelch open and honest discourse on a controversial subject like prison rape with any means at their disposal. The ACLU was one of the first groups to publicly eulogize Donny up the news of his death.

Donny did a lot of dumb things in his life, things that got him thrown into jail or beaten up; for someone who bragged about his IQ, he could be exasperatingly obtuse and self-destructive. Sometimes he said or wrote things without thinking them all the way through, and there were many times I just wanted to throw up my arms and give up on him. But Donny The Punk was one of those rare people - a totally unique individual - you're sometimes lucky enough to meet, and when someone like that comes into your life, you don't let them go. I was proud to have him as a friend, and I miss him already.

- Jim Testa, July 19, 1996

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# Jersey Beat Mailbox

Dear Jim Testa and Jersey Beat,

In 10 years of on and off fanzine reading, I have always resisted the temptation of sending in letters and feeding the fires of mostly irrelevant inner-scene bullshit. It is with issue 56 of *Jersey Beat* that I finally breakdown. Specifically I am writing concerning your "report" on ABC-NO-RIO. I feel like I should say "thanks" for the publicity or something, but it seems that every time we turn around there's another rag doing their obligatory ABC article and almost without fail, none of them seem to get it straight (assuming that "straight" is a word you could ever use in association with ABC). I'm not trying to sell ABC to anyone or to "defend our reputation" - as I'm actually one of our biggest critics - but I just needed to state some facts, point some shit out, and say my piece. I'll warn you now: what started out as a simple letter has turned into a fucking novel and a bunch of things I ended up going into were not even mentioned in the initial *Jersey Beat* article. In many ways I'm taking this time to vent and to include some crucial issues I thought were missing from that piece. I guess ultimately I'm so sick to fuck of hearing people's rumor mill versions about what we do here and why we do it, that I took this opportunity to explain some things that have gone unanswered in the past. I hope that people who care will read this and I hope that in the future, people will direct their comments and questions towards us rather than those who have nothing to do with us. Also I know I'm like 5 months late with this but that's about par for me so fuck it!

First of all, the cover headline read "Behind The Scenes" at ABC, but really your article was a short and inevitably incomplete history lesson. For one thing most of the people you chose to focus on have not been going shows at ABC on a regular basis for a couple of years now (yourself included). Of those that you did speak to who are still involved here (Amanda and Esneider,) I feel that you quoted them somewhat out of context - but I'll leave them to speak on that if they feel the need. I do agree with a lot of what you said about the vitality and importance of that early scene and of those early bands. They certainly left their mark on me and I'm probably guilty of romanticizing those times as much as anybody else. But I think it's exactly that kind of "good ol' days" hero-worship shit which guarantees that something as cool won't happen again and I think engaging in that is really pointless. As for the whole "where are they now" "what went wrong at ABC" questions (cue dramatic music now), these are bound to yield answers which are a bit one-sided and vary from person to person. I have no doubts that the reasons people have for giving up on ABC are real - if I had a nickel for every time I nearly left this shithole for good, I'd have many nickels. But I think it's a little stupid to leave somewhere and then assume that everything (including the things that drove you away) will remain frozen in the spot that you left it. I think it's safe to say that this place goes through cycles and whether you think things are "good" or "bad" at ABC largely depends on where you stand.

For example: I sometimes hear people say "Oh, ABC was so much better a year or two ago" and I know that from the point of view of many of the kids coming down here, that WAS a great period because there were a lot of shows happening and a lot more bands coming through. But I know that for me as a volunteer, I was pretty miserable during this time because the running of the space was really haphazard and the communication between those that booked and those that ran the shows (and those that did both) was pretty scattered. This, incidentally, was after Neil stopped being the sole booker and a group of us attempted to book the shows collectively.

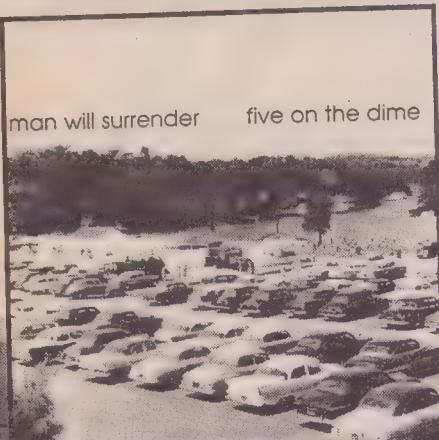
Personally I didn't like it because there was no mechanism in place to respect peoples work i.e., you could be working on a show, write it down on the calendar, and come back days later to find it changed, co-opted, or canceled without your input. This would also happen with the physical space: You could spend all day cleaning the kitchen, doing repairs, assembling shelves, building lofts, storing artwork (etc.) and the next day - BOOM - the fruits of your labor trashed. And even though we maintained the pretense of deciding things "collectively," the fact was that all types of decisions often got made when a group of people were hanging out and decided to move on something. If you weren't part of this cool group - tough shit - you'd find out soon enough. We also had problems with: people booking shows and leaving town (and making no arrangements;) people outside of the collective booking shows/bands; people canceling their own shows but neglecting to tell the bands; people claiming to represent bands they didn't and "booking" them anyway; and people having shows and leaving without cleaning up or dispersing the crowd that had formed out front (these 2 fun jobs would then fall on the people squatting upstairs.) And because we often had more than one show a week during this period, people started picking which show they'd volunteer at, flyer for, etc. If yours was the least cool show for that week, you ran it alone, for the six people who showed up to see the 4 bands who'd traveled across America to play the great ABC No Rio.

All of this happened often enough to make every last one of us tired, pissed, bitter and burnt. For all of these reasons it was decided that the booking would be centralized and that people who kept "booking hours" at ABC would be the channels through which shows would be booked. Since Esneider and I had been doing that for a little while, it was decided unanimously, at a meeting of the "show" people, that we would become the calendar fascists. Our responsibilities included (and still include)

- making sure every show has volunteers
- making sure every band intends on showing up and can be contacted by phone
- making sure the shows are self-sufficient and that the work is done by the volunteers not the house squatters (unless they offer)
- keeping bands that treat our space and volunteers like shit out of our space
- preventing volunteer burnout by not booking a zillion shows a month
- booking lesser known touring/local bands with better known touring/local bands and
- paying the bands we book proportionate to the distance they've traveled, while securing enough money to keep ABC going (usually 35% of the door - although our legal fees sometimes force us to take more and poorly attended shows sometimes make us take less. In either scenario we usually tell the bands why they got paid the amount they did).

Because of all this it is now slightly harder/easier (depending on your "scene status") to get a show here. Where as being friends of a volunteer, being an ex-member of a cool band, or having spent X amount of time on the scene might have been good enough to get booked in the past, we now pretty much require a tape and lyric sheet from every band who has not played here before. Bands who want shows here also have to call us during our booking hours. Although these sound like two simple requests, you would not BELIEVE how many bands/people think this is an oppressive policy or (we've heard) feel we owe THEM a phone call. We also - as said - get a lot of kids bitching about how there aren't as many shows

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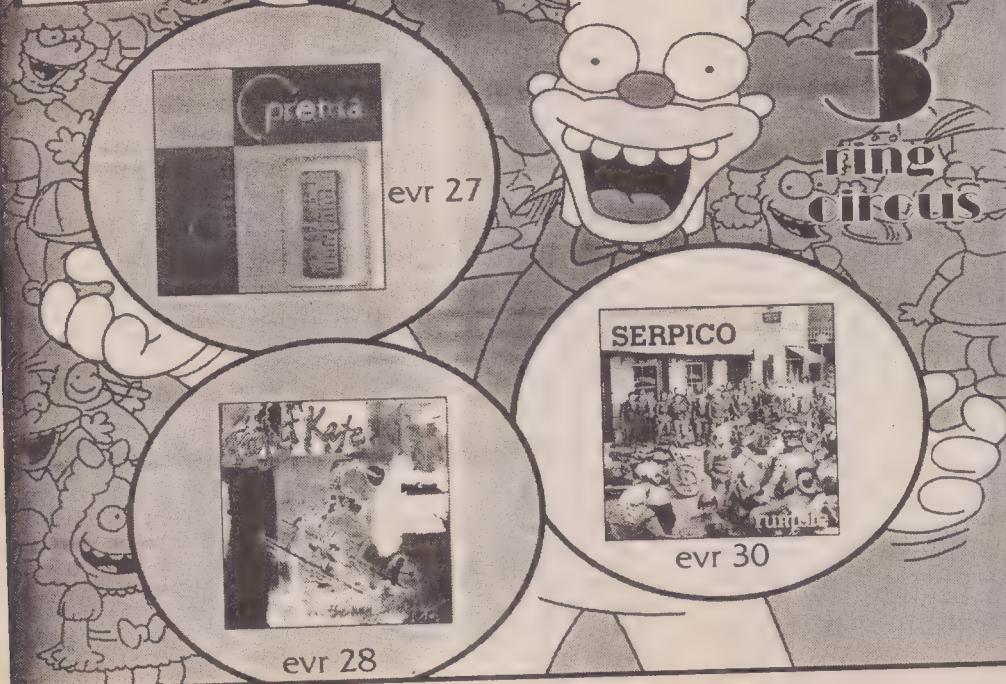
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anymore. But when we tell them that the # of shows we do relates to the volunteer power we have, and ask them "would you like to volunteer" - SHIT! the silence is DEAFENING.

Back to your article, Jim: not everyone who comes here is a "road warrior" crusty type and not everyone who used to come here was a "clean cut suburban kid" (Mike B.S. was from Queens, Freddy Alva too, half of Citizen's Arrest were "borough" kids as are me and Esneider as were many who came to shows here in the early '90s. And realize of course, that as least as many "crusties" as hardcore kids, come from the 'burbs - if not more). I will admit though, that in the last couple of years there has been a real increase in fraternity style "punk" (?!), drinking, and sadly, a decrease in more political/ movement-oriented hardcore punk. It seems there are less people that come to shows here doing labels and 'zines and out of those that are, many of them seem obsessed with regurgitating cartoon-like stereotypes of past punk scenes. And of course (as mentioned twice previously) there is a serious drop in the # of people coming to shows who are motivated to volunteer. Why is this? Well I've got my own little theories...

1. Many of the kids coming down to the shows nowadays are younger. While THAT (age) in and of itself means absolutely nothing, things have obviously changed and it has affected the "new generation". Ten years ago punk/hardcore and other since-popularized dissenting music forms were GENUINELY HARD TO FIND. The whole Green Day/ Rancid set present punk (and the scenes that spawned them) completely out of context on MTV, to a push-button audience. In this new vision, shows, labels, bands, 'zines, MOVEMENTS don't come after shit work and pain, they just ... happen, in a ready-made, soft-edged, consumer-friendly environment. All evidence of the labor that created these things is erased (and mostly upper-middle class kids - who can't relate to doing shitwork - don't see anything wrong with this picture). This has happened on a national level and believe you me, we see it's repercussions on Rivington St. (I'm not saying that ALL the teenagers who come here are like that, mind you. The majority of our volunteers are testimony to the backlash against this stupid trend, but they are definitely in the minority).

2. A similar thing has also happened on a more local level: I completely agree with what Joe said about ABC being a refuge: I was ■ scrawny, loud-mouthed, political punk kid from Brooklyn who went to high school in Manhattan from '86 -'89. I knew some kids who were part of the whole CB's matinee thing. For the most part they were real ignorant, nationalist shitheads who would gang up on you if they thought it would impress somebody in that scene. During those 3 years I think I went to less than half a dozen hardcore/punk shows - mainly because I didn't want to deal with being fucked with for being myself. When I went to my first show at ABC (8/25/90 - GO!, Citizen's Arrest, Rorschach and No Empathy) I was stunned. It was like all the political/geek/freak/ and activist kids that had been expelled from the established hardcore and punk scenes, had gone and built their own. In fact that is EXACTLY what had happened. I was so overjoyed that I had to fight the compulsion to hug all these strangers. I decided almost immediately that I HAD TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE EXISTENCE OF THIS PLACE IN SOME SMALL WAY. That, I think, is the big difference between then and now. Gilman street and ABC No Rio type places have spoiled people - they're INSTITUTIONS whose existence people take for granted. I think it's safe to say that NO ONE expected shows at ABC to last one year (much less seven) - but you now have kids who have started and stopped coming to shows without ever knowing what its like to be without a place like ABC. We fucking LOVED ABC. It was a revelation to us that you could have a non-violent scene based on friendship and ideas rather than who could kick the shit out of who in the pit. But nowadays, when we enforce our no racist, sexist, homophobic assholes/bands policy, kids call us the "P.C. police". When we tell them about Mike getting hospitalized twice for (being gay and) speaking his mind and explain that THIS is the type of shit you feared at most CB's shows - they just can't relate.

Another thing you have to remember when talking about our "decline" is that some bands that have been around for a while choose not to play ABC anymore. If this is because we suck - then fine - but more often than not we find that these same bands aren't seeking out alternative D.I.Y. spaces or trying to build new ones. Instead they are putting their resources behind bars and bullshit clubs and playing shows with other established bands. OF COURSE the result is going to be an increase

see that 95% of the focus is on hardcore/punk/noise bands who already have large followings. I see very few names I don't recognize, which is bad. It's THAT type of shit that plays a huge role in the death of a healthy underground and in the "decline" of places like ABC: Many people who carried the flag for years don't seem to think its worth it anymore. I figure some of the reasons for this are...

- they're older now and they can get into bars/clubs.
- hardcore/punk/noise is marketable now and their bands can play in bars/clubs.
- they're bored with hardcore/punk/ D.I.Y. shows and people (which is funny 'cause nothing bores me shitless more than the "music as wallpaper" atmosphere at places like Continental, Brownies etc).
- they got burnt out.
- they think they've seen/heard all there is to see/hear out of the punk/hardcore/D.I.Y. scenes.
- they got fucked over by or had fights with D.I.Y. people/spaces/bands they trusted and figure that in-fighting is the inevitable result of all attempts at sub-cultural independence.
- they generally just don't give a fuck anymore.
- who knows? the end result is the same regardless.

A couple of things on Donny's piece. First he says that we're too hierarchical with our band order, then he says that often enough we put the "best" bands on too early (!!!?). The Suspects had "been billed 2nd out of 5 bands." I wasn't at that show, but I've never known us to preset a "billing order" and I can only guess where Donny got one from (maybe he saw it on one of those flyers we never hand out). Usually we decide the order of the bands on the spot, in accordance with each band's needs (and according to who shows up when). OF COURSE we try and put the "draw bands" on last - not because we are trying to foster a "hierarchical" order - but because if you put the popular band on first all their open minded fans will leave without seeing the lesser knowns. Secondly - and I know this might be hard to believe - we HAVE turned down bands for reasons other than bigoted lyrics. Admittedly a crappy sounding demo is low on our list of singular reasons why not to book a band, but it has happened (with me nyway). Interestingly enough though, we tend to find that the shittiest sounding music also "just happens" to come from people who are bigoted, uninspired, arrogant, stupid, rude or looking to turn a buck on our backs (funny how that seems to work ... ). Finally a big thanks but no thanks to Donny and anyone else who feels in their "head but not their heart" the knee-jerk compulsion to say nice things about a place they don't like. We need honest communication and sweat. Save that guilt shit for church. If ABC No Rio is already dead to you then let it go, stop your bitching and put your extra energy into starting up something else - we'd all be a lot better for it. Perhaps what needs closer examination here is why 95% of the people in this so-called punk scene are so unwilling to use their hands as much as their mouths.

Jim, if you do print this fully, let me say thank you. In closing I want to give you 10 reasons why I STILL volunteer At ABC: YANKEE WUSS (OR), ONE NATURE (NJ), 7 YEARS WAR (VT), VORHEES (UK), FEDAYKIN (MA, R.I.P.), MUNG (MA), THE SKIZMATICS (NY), CO-ERCION (NY), LIFE (NY) and NO COMPLY (NJ). These are all bands that played at ABC for the first time between January and May. I recommend them all, and incidentally, they sound nothing alike. Also, if anyone out there wants to write an article about ABC, I suggest they interview the volunteers who currently run the shows. Some of their names are/were Tamara, Alex, Melinda, Helen, Jen, Greg, Sean, Alex N., Jamie, Erica and Christian. I'm sure they can give anyone interested a good idea of what's going on here. And yes, new volunteers are still always needed.

d. powell, ABC No Rio Volunteer

P.S. Between the time I first wrote this and finally printed it, Donny died. At first I was going to cut out the part that mentioned his editorial because I think it's not cool to speak about people who have passed away and thus can't respond. Later, I came to figure that what I wrote relates to issues Donny raised via what he wrote (which I thought was inaccurate) and is not a personal attack on Donny. So in it stayed. R.I.P. Big Don.

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# NJ's Coalition Of Artists Helping To Create A Scene

by Tom Brebric

"Coalition of Artists: helping unsigned artists help themselves" is what the fine print said on the back of the absolutely awesome Kill the Rock Star NJ hardcore/punk compilation CD. In this day of greed and corporate record giants hiding behind indie fronts, it was reassuring to see some one truly helping to support the local music scene and I hope this interview with J. Guzik of the Coalition of Artists sheds some light on what this organization is all about.

Q: What was it that got the idea of COA going?

JG: Basically Jon Nardachone (from Atlantic Records) and I were both NJ musicians as kids in bands and we felt we needed to do something to unite the scene because the cover bands were raging thru NJ. We wanted to do something to bring back a sense of unity that was missing. I do radio for Earache Records in NYC (Napalm Death's label, along with a bunch of other industrial and techno bands) - and some of the ideas for COA came from that..

Q: I, being the avid gun aficionado that I am, couldn't help but notice the beautiful IMI Eagle .44 magnum handgun photo on the CD sleeve, definitely not your typical prop gun.

JG: I have to thank my neighbor for that - I'm deathly afraid of guns and that's why I called this CD Kill the Rock Stars.

Q: When did this comp first come out?

JG: It's been out since about Valentine's Day. We wanted to keep it underground and sent it to mainly college radio stations - WSOU, WFMU, WFDU, etc. We took the approach that we wanted the people who were interested to search it out. To be honest, I'm not even sure how you got a copy. We really did not do the official promo for it. We both work at labels and have mailing lists, etc.

Q: Is it true that you pressed 3,000 copies in one shot?

JG: Yeah, we had a good deal. We asked all the bands (21 of them) to contribute \$200 - that gave us our marketing money and we basically gave the bands free rein to get rid of as many CDs as they wanted. If a band, for instance, was really big down in South Jersey, and wanted us to send them like 200 copies to move in a record store in their area, we did.

Q: Is the COA just a NJ thing as far as the bands involved?

JG: The COA is pretty much my idea. I just wanted bands to have a forum to discuss things, whether it's recording, who's an asshole, will so-and-so do a good job, will a recording studio give me a good deal, do I want ASCAP or BMI? We're going to be putting together a newsletter to let other bands in the COA know what other bands are doing.

Q: Is the next CD going to have out of state bands?

JG: I haven't talked about that with my partner yet, I'd like to limit it to NJ bands, but maybe a tri-state NY/CT thing. At first, we thought

about licensing this through another label, but we decided to keep this totally underground. We might in the future pursue national distribution, but right now we're trying to keep it on our own terms. The next CD will be a bit more structured and we might open it up to some more genres of music such as dub, trip, maybe ska. The overwhelming majority will still be the harder stuff.. Of the approximately 200 demos we received - we used about 18 of them for the KTRS CD.

Q: I know you've been involved with booking, like the show the C.O.A. sponsored at the Court Tavern in New Brunswick, NJ. How is that being handled?

JG: Actually we've done a couple shows at the Court Tavern. Most of the shows have been in the North Bergen area - Ruins in Lodi, NJ, and so on. We wanted to leave it to the bands on the CD since many of them are friends and could increase the draw by putting on shows together.

## Local News

Q: Did the bands have a say in what songs ended up on the CD?

JG: Yes, what we asked was for the bands to send us a demo (on DAT) of their material and we told them which song we liked most and the band had the right to nix our choice if they did not like it.

Q: Was this all mastered in your home studio?

JG: We put all the DATS together on one DAT and we used a guy by the name of Alan Duches from West West Side in Tenafly, NJ (whose done the Misfits Box Set, a lot of stuff for Caroline, etc.)

Q: Were the bands on this compilation all people you knew, by invitation only - how did you get the submittals?

JG: We wanted to keep it close to our hearts - we told the people we knew, they passed the word and we did some flyers - but as it turned out, the bands ended up being rather North Jersey based - all people who knew the scene. We plan to advertise more for the next one to get some more diversification.

Q: Who is doing the distribution for this?

JG: We went thru a bunch of Indie distributors - even kids at rock shows that sell CD's in the back of the club. We wanted to show that this could be done without major distributors.

Q: I assume the COA a non-profit organization?

JG: Totally. To be honest, I lose money on it. The address on the CD is my house and home phone number, and when kids call we try hook them up with the right people who can help them out. It's about community, for instance - one guy in a band is a printer who'll print everything up really cheap, the othe guy's dad owns a studio,

Q: How much press has Kill The Rock Stars received?

JG: We've been fortunate when it comes to getting publicity; The Aquarian has mentioned us numerous times, most of the east coast zines have given us favorable press also. As far as a national press, I have a friend at EMI who tells me a writer from Rolling Stone recommended the CD to him - we have no idea where he got the CD from. We're even thinking about doing a second pressing of KTRS since it's sold so well.

Q: What have you learned from the C.O.A.'s first endeavor?

JG: To count on your friends. The music industry is so competitive and full of shit - but you'll get further by sticking with your friends than by trying to do it on your own and telling everyone else they suck. Maybe that idea sounds like hippy retro 70s, but ...

Q: Do you yourself play in a band?

JG: I'm the guitar player on track 17 in a band called Suplex. It's a really heavy, sludgy, noisy band. Jon is the bass player in Murder One. I've been kind of busy and Suplex has kind of gone to the side.

Q: Are you putting together any shows in Manhattan?

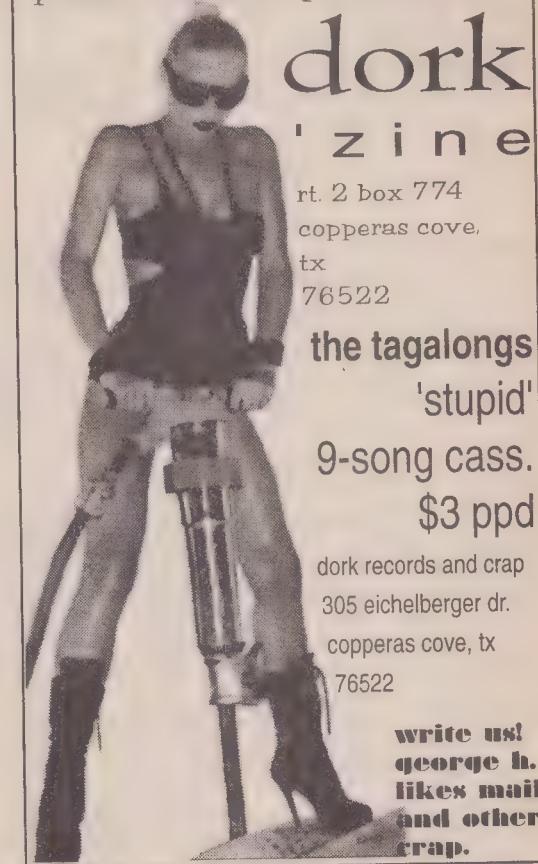
JG: No, not really, we're trying to stay away from that scene. They'd probably say "fuck you - you're from Jersey", so we'll wait till they come to us. We've done individual shows; for instance, Felix Frump has showcased at CBGB, 383 Stroker is going to play the Continental Divide, etc. New York City is a tough scene to crack - everything has to be ultra cool. Some of the bands did play the MAC festival. My goal was that if I put out a CD with 18 bands and just one person gets turned on to a new band, then I've done my job. As it turned out, four or five of the bands on the CD wound up getting signed.

The Coalition Of Artists can be reached at: 453 Madeline Ave., Garfield, NJ 07026

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## REVIEWS FOR BRUSHBACK #4:

Dave Run It is back with his irreverent, politically incorrect take on punk, hardcore, and sports... I laughed out loud five times reading this, and that's not counting all the chuckles and smirks -- Jersey Beat fanzine (NJ)  
"A strangely unique publication, lacking the typical cut-and-paste filler of lesser zines... lengthy interviews, crisp full-sized photos, and thick glossy pages, with not a single advertisement to be seen" -- Etch fanzine (MI)  
"Creature Did and Rev. Norb are interviewed with the usual acidic reviews and opinions. I can't help laughing, which means either he's really funny, I'm just as cynical as he is, or I'm losing my mind a lot quicker than anyone" -- Chairs Missing fanzine (CT)

## BRUSHBACK



## BRUSHBACK #5 OUT NOW!

52 pages featuring interviews with Chixdiggit, Paul Lukas of Beer Frame zine, and local CT bands Nevertheless, Explodee, and Farmertan (because our scene kicks ass). Edition of 200, includes Explodee/Nevertheless split 45 with picture sleeve. \$6 by 1st Class mail (cash or money order only please).

Dave  
139 Sunnyside Ave  
Waterbury CT 06708

Mention that you saw this ad in Jersey Beat when you order and I'll include a copy of Brushback #4 also. Watch for more Sidearm Records stuff in '97.

"YOU CAN'T BRING TOO MUCH AMMO TO A GUNFIGHT"

The CMJ Music Marathon has become the biggest and most important of these music industry things since the New Music Seminar went belly up a few summers ago. What's it all mean? A chance for a few thousand college-radio kids from all over the country to spend a week in New York City. The bands get the worst deal; the idea that A&R people actually sign groups on the basis of these industry showcases is a lot of hooey, largely promulgated by the conferences themselves (how else to get all those thousands of bands to pony up the submission fees for the few choice gigs available?) And of course what happens is that 90% of the bands who travel all the way to NYC to play for no money wind up playing to a handful of college radio kids and maybe, if they're lucky, a fanzine geek like me. And the bands who get signed are the ones who had the big buzz and were already in some label's sights before they ever registered for CMJ. At any rate, here's my diary of a few nights out on the town at this year's CMJ Music Marathon. - Jim Testa

#### Wednesday, Sept. 4

This triple bill of Lookout bands at Maxwell's in Hoboken looked like a lot of fun. It turned out to be a lot more exciting than anyone thought. Pansy Division just keeps getting better and better every time I see them. Jon Ginoli has really loosened up - he was painfully stiff when the band first got together, but now he smiles and makes faces and puts a lot of expression into the songs - which, of course, are those lovably catchy punk-rock ditties about falling in love with cute punk rock boys and getting blow jobs, and all the other joys of gay sex that these guys sing about. Lanky, rubber-faced bassist Chris Freeman is a day at the circus all by himself, and Dustin is one of punk's most entertaining drummers, as much fun to watch as he is to listen to. Just to make the night extra special, The Pansy's had the stage decorated with white Christmas tree lights and a couple of big Pansy Division flower-decked banners. A great set.

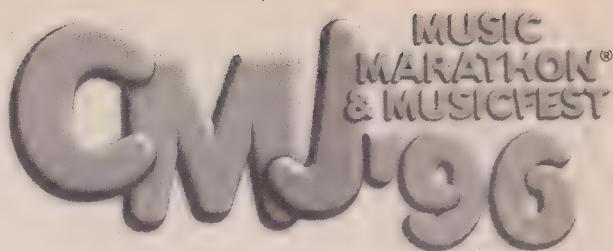
The Smugglers came on in their matching Blues Brothers suits and shades and proceeded to rock the house. These guys are good old-fashioned garage-rockers who borrow a lot of the stage choreography and antics of the old Fleshtones. The set included a dance contest (won by Teen Scene editor Blair Buscareno) and a trivia contest, in which the winner (a good-looking gal in what looked like her prom dress) got to plant a big kiss on the drummer. The music is pretty standard 60's garage-rock but these guys put so much into it that they're really entertaining.

Just as all-gal pop trio Cub was getting ready to go on, Maxwell's booker and manager Todd Abramson came rushing into the back room and asked everybody to leave through the back door. Once we got outside, we could see why - a grease fire had broken out in the kitchen. It wasn't much to look at when we left the building, but within a few minutes, the whole kitchen was on fire. The Hoboken Fire Dept. showed up with a couple of fire engines (it turned out to be a three-alarm), hoses, axes, the works. They got the fire out in a few minutes but that was the end of the night. Forty-five minutes later, there was still thick, greasy smoke streaming out of the front door and the kitchen was a total loss, but fortunately no one was hurt and the club itself didn't sustain too much damage.

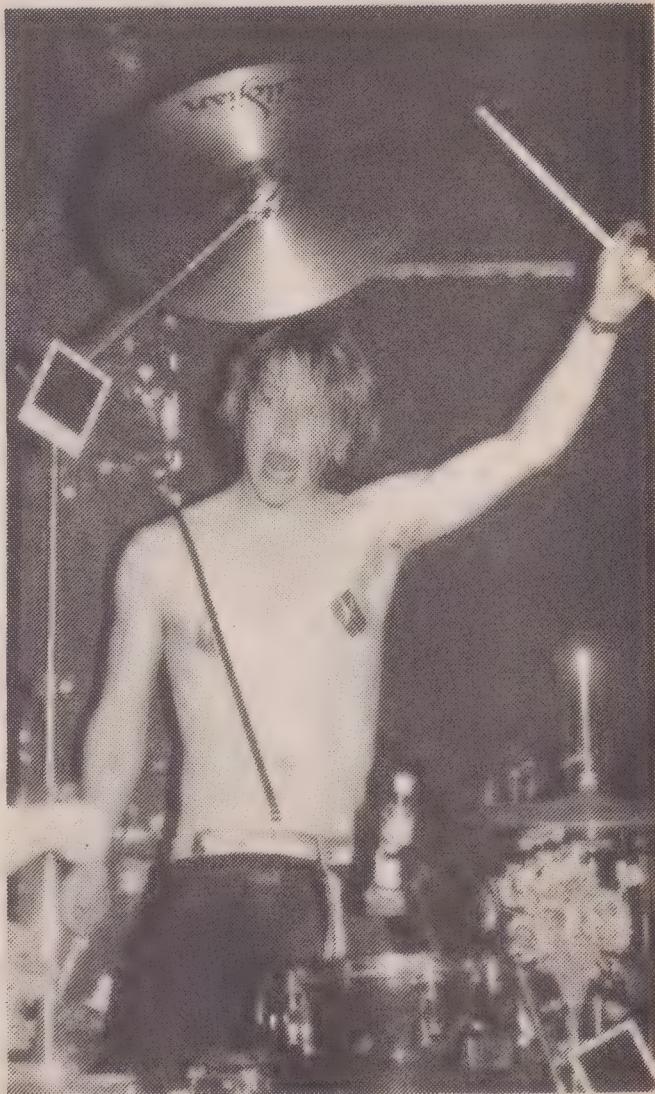
#### Thursday, September 5

With all the ballyhoo about how important it is for bands to get gigs at these conventions, it might be instructional to note that Anthropobia - newly signed to Mausoleum Records and getting a ton of college-radio airplay - played their big CMJ showcase at 7 p.m. in front of me, Jack Ball, and the publicist from the record label. So much for the great "exposure" you get at these things. The 'phobias rocked nonetheless, doing that crunchy pop/metal thing they do so well, and by the end of the set, a few more brave souls had wandered into The Spiral. But still... a three-hour drive from Reading PA to play in front of half a dozen people?

From the Spiral it was a quick walk over to the Pyramid to catch the Love Huskies. The Pyramid used to be one of NYC's best clubs years ago but the place has turned into a pit, managed by surly,



## Or, What's A Nice Band Like You Doing In A Place Like This?



Dustin Donaldson, PANSY DIVISION

exploitative creeps who don't give a damn about the bands who play there. They now make the bands play in the dank, dingy basement (years ago, when the Pyramid was still happening, this space was the club's VIP lounge,) which has all the charm of John Wayne Gacey's basement rec room. Philly's Love Huskies, now on NYC's Gotham Records, have started to outgrow their Replacements influences, adding a bit more of their own personality to their winsome slacker ballads. Songs like "Twentynothing" still resonate with a distinctive Westerbergian vibe, but lead singer/bassist XXXX is learning how to modulate his raspy vocals a bit more, and the group's twin guitars deliver a distinctive riff or two.

Next stop was crosstown a bit to Under Acme, where I arrived just in time to catch the first song by The Van Peite. Lead singer Chris Leo spent his puberty caterwauling in the zany Native Nod; now he's fronting this surprisingly sophisticated, low-key indie-rock quartet. The band's gently undulating melodies frame Leo's delicate vocals, which he delivers either quietly spoken or in a charmingly unselfconscious boyish tenor. Watch for this band, they've got greatness in them. Next up were Verbena, a band that traffics in late 60's sludge-rock. "It's 1969, okay?" said Iggy, and maybe it was okay in 1969, but hearing this kind of heavy, hard, post-garage, pre-metal Rock again only served to remind me of why no one listens to Steppenwolf anymore.

Happily, things improved enormously with Chisel, who flounced through a set of their manic Mod pop tunes with energy to spare. The band debuted quite a bit of new material in this set, with singer/guitarist Ted Leo (yes, Chris Leo's big brother) using Under Acme's roomy stage to spin and strut a bit when he wasn't glued to the mic. With their Who-ish power chords and Beatlesque harmonies, Chisel may be a bit retro, but there's still plenty of Nineties (s)punk in their Sixties power-pop.

#### Friday, September 6

Exhaustion hung on my body like a lead overcoat. After an unusually mellow summer, the weather decided to turn unseasonably muggy in September, turning New York into a sauna and making CMJ as uncomfortably hot & humid as it used to get for the old New Music Seminar (which was always held in late July.) After two separate dinner dates fell through, I decided to shelf home after work and rest a bit before heading back out into Clubland. Even though it meant missing *The X Files*, I got back into the city at around 8:30 pm, just in time to catch Trip 66 at the Spiral. The kids were great, as usual, sweating up a storm in what has to be one of the most poorly ventilated venues in the city (the Spiral gets uncomfortably stuffy in the winter; in the summer, you can work up a sweat in there just ordering a beer, and it's always twice as hot on stage.) Unfortunately, the turnout wasn't what it could have been, since almost every Columbia/Sony label person was attending a showcase for Rasputina across town. (And then people wonder why fanzines think major labels have their priorities all screwed up.)

Golf, the next band on the bill, proved mildly interesting, in that they're the first Nada Surf wannabes I'd ever seen. They did a couple of spoken word-into-driving chorus numbers like "Popular" and a few generic pop tunes (which sounded like the rest of Nada Surf's set,) and as all this was running through my mind, who should walk into the club but Nada Surf lead singer Matt Caws. Golf must be his kid brothers' band. Or something.

At that point, I had originally intended to walk up Avenue A to Brownie's and try to catch Mineral and Trans Am, but since I could barely stand up straight, I decided to head home and get some sleep instead.

#### Saturday, September 7

After a fun-filled morning of answering mail, doing laundry, and cleaning up my bedroom, my brother decided to drop off my niece and nephew for a while and I wound up babysitting through the afternoon. That killed any plans to check out what left of the CMJ convention, so instead I waited until evening and then headed over to a packed, steamy Continental to see L.E.S. Stitches. There are a bunch of New York bands doing the retro-garage punk thing really

well these days, but the Stitches are my favorite. Lead singer Mick looks a little like a young Johnny Rotten (only with Iggy's body); the rest of the group is as homely as Mick is cute and the combination seems to work, all these big ugly guys throttling monster riffs out of their guitars while Mick chokes himself with the mike cord, rips off his shirt, and whips the crowd into a frenzy. It was well over 90 degrees with about 100 percent humidity inside the Continental; I left sated, smiling, and soaking wet.

After the Stitches set, it was a short stroll up St. Mark's Place to Coney Island High, where Cosmic and Dirt Records were having a joint showcase. Ink Pot Monkey, the band I was there to see was both cosmic and a little dirty, but on neither of those labels... they had crawled out from under the wreckage of Hurricane Fran and driven up from Wilmington, North Carolina just for this show.

Most of the bands on the bill - Bison, Semi-Gloss, Trona, Saturnine - were cookie-cutter Boston "college rock:" A couple of grungy twenty-somethings with noisy guitars and at least one girl in the band, wearing a pretty dress and looking very perky. Semi-Gloss threw a little surfy guitar into the mix, Trona was the catchiest of the bunch, but to tell you the truth, they were all so interchangeable that I can barely remember one from the other.

That can't be said for Ink Pot Monkey, three whooping, rambunctious good ole boys from North Carolina who seem to get much more southern the minute they step on stage. Lead singer/guitarist Kenyata Sullivan was in rare form - he baited the crowd, used every



L.E.S. Stitches

Photo by Jim Testa

four-letter word in the book at least eight times, insulted New York audiences ("y'all got a stick up your ass, standing there with your arms folded glarin' at us, don't you people ever smile?"), sang about his dog ("bark bark bark bark bark bark bark"), fell head over heels off the stage (taking his amp with him,) played a weepy country tune about his dad... and when nothing he did got a rise out of the nearly-comatose and terminally jaded CMJ audience, finally blew his stack and screamed "Don't you people remember when punk rock was supposed to be FUN?!?!"

CMJ Music Marathons come and go; this was my eighth, and I can't remember a damn thing about the first seven. But this year's festival, what with Maxwell's almost burning down the first night and Kenyata almost restarting the Civil War on the last night, will be hard to forget.

# LOLLAPALOOZA

Story and photos by Greg Matherly

MURFREESBORO, TN - I remember back in the summer of '93 I vowed never to attend Lollapalooza again. The first one was great because it was new and exciting. It was a huge festival of freaks, a revolutionary display of counterculture du jour, and with all the publicity that surrounded the scorned music of yesterday, I thought that the entire world was changing. The second year was a bit less mystical and by the time the third tour rolled around, the corporate beast had revealed himself, swimming in my \$3.50 cup of water. I felt betrayed and used and I retreated into the badmouthed, anti-Perry Farrell son of a bitch that I am today. So when Zero Hour records called and asked if I planned on attending this years' Lollapalooza, I had my share of choice remarks. I couldn't believe



Soundgarden's Chris Cornell

that such a cool label was interested in having ties with the largest display of twenty-something capitalism. And then they said that I would have free passes and photo privileges if I wanted to go... in an instant I recalled hearing that Perry Farrell had washed his hands of the whole festival and then I realized that the Ramones would probably never pass this way again. I quickly agreed to go cover the show. I hung up the phone in a rush of excitement, later wondering just how fast I'd sign that big Warner Bros. contract.

## Saturday evening, July 20 1996

I started drinking late in the afternoon so by 7:30 I was fully prepared to embark on our questionable journey. The show wasn't until Sunday but it was decided that we should probably leave before we ran out of beer. The road crew consisted of my girlfriend Christy, who was driven by a strange, dark excitement known only to big fans of the Melvins, and our friend Keith, who was to provide the camera, vehicle, and the support, should I start to doubt my decision to go to the most commercial show of the year.

Christy was packing a few things, I was testing the effects of caffeine on top of alcohol, and Keith was in the kitchen making a Sunday morning favorite - pot brownies. The beauty of the marijuana brownie lies in its longevity. One muffin size snack with a five-finger pinch of nature's finest is enough to make it through an entire David Bowie box set. And for those who have not had the honor of cooking with pot, I might add that the effect of the drug is much more intense when digested. But there is an even more pragmatic value to the fudgy treat which is of great importance when in an open field with hundreds of strangers - no smoke.

We rolled 3 joints for use en route, loaded up our goods, and made a quick pass to see if we had forgotten anything. Almost out the door and we realized that if we were going to be coming back, we would need a few more joints. So with all delays, we finally left Nashville at about 9:00 to meet up with Lollapalooza in Newport, TN, some 200 miles away. We had no idea where we were spending the night, we had very little money, and we weren't too sure how to get to the show... sounded like real rock 'n roll to me.

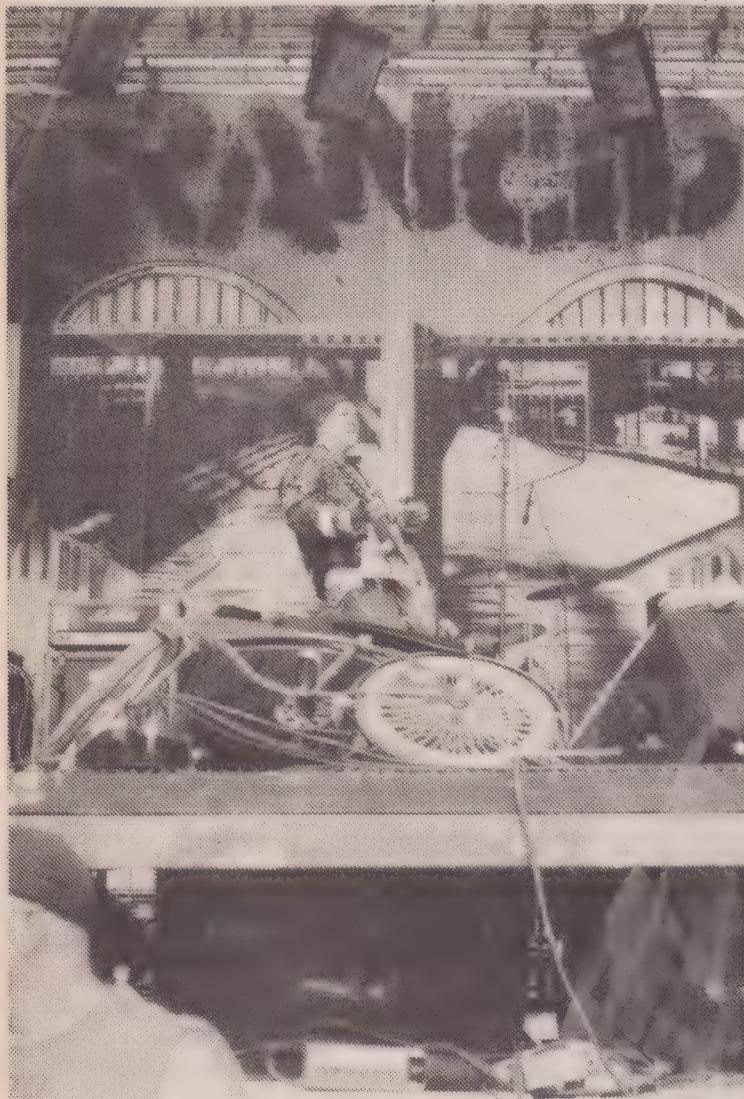
## Our Arsenal:

- 1 camera
- 5 joints
- 1 carrying case of tapes
- 6 rolls of film
- 5 beers (assorted)
- 1 cassette recorder
- 1 bottle of sun block
- \$60 cash
- 6 pot brownies

At about 10:30 we stopped for gas and bathroom meditations. I realized just how crowded it was going to be at the show when I encountered several tie-dyed, long-haired olfactory bombardiers pumping gas -- while a few Nine Inch Nails groupie looking chicks, complete with the mid-eighties Siouxsie look, were buying cigarettes beside tribal swirled calves. What's

funny about the counter culture today is the obvious time and attention spent in honing the outward appearance when there seems to be little concern for any type of revolutionary behavior other than attending the occasional humane/equality benefit show. I realize that its all relative to the activism in the sixties and the times have a-changed by far, but even so, it almost seems that the whole world could turn into a fascist dictatorship as long as there was a good concert every now and then and nipple piercing was still legal. That tells me one of two things: either our large, "restless" culture today is filled with those who are content with the things they see around them or there has been absolutely no thought given to social/political matters. It almost makes me wish that Reagan would remember where the White House is just to show all the Rage Against the Machine fans that better music can be made. Shit, I'm starting to sound like P.J. O'Rourke.

The trek between Memphis and Nashville is littered with images of Elvis. From Nashville to Newport, however, the choice signs include extended billboards of Dolly Parton, and the pseudo-pensive posturing of the proud Lee Greenwood. I love Tennessee. What it often lacks in the way of musical happenings and artistic events, it more than accounts for in unhampered natural beauty. The rolling hills and inconsistent, salient bulges that fight to interrupt the interstate will gladly reduce your speed to a mere 35mph if you don't acknowledge the immensity of your surroundings. Ah, and lets not forget the sleek and powerful glories of Tennessee's



Two generations of punk: Rancid and the Ramones



finest piece of Oak Ridge architecture. Nestled within lush summertime hills, pregnant with the foggy air of delicate southern relaxation, we travelers of night witnessed the haughty command of Oak Ridge's dual nuclear reactors. Yep, the home of Elvis and the A-bomb! Answer that one for me. I won't even begin to unfold the great Hee-Haw conspiracy theory.

After about three hours of roller-coaster, road trip drone, we decided to hit Knoxville up for a place to crash. Newport is only 30 miles from Knoxville so finding a room was no easy task. At about 2am, tired and vacant of most qualities of reason, we discovered the last of the great \$25 dives. The evening came to a close much in the same manner as most weekend nights do in the heart of America; with a plate of fast food and an equally unhealthy dose of late night television. It reminded me of the time I was outstretched on over-bleached sheets in Atlanta. Mudhoney was playing at the Masquerade as I lay cool and penniless, watching reruns of Remington Steele.

#### Sunday, July 21

We arose at 9 am and after washing the road silt off our bodies, we headed down towards Newport. As Keith drove, Christy prepared our breakfast by crumbling brownies in half. We were on the road, the sky was clear, and we were starting the day off with some pot brownie crumbles and beer. Poetry. At a convenience store where we stopped for gas and directions, I overheard a tale of great sorrow for all of the hot Lollapaloozers. It seems that Cocke County, the home of the Forks of the River entertainment ground and this years host to Lollapalooza, does not sell beer on Sunday. Oh well, at least we didn't have to worry about stepping in puke.

Right past Alice's Restaurant we encountered the standard freak traffic jam. Most of the locals that lived near the grounds were out in their yards wondering if this sort of thing should be allowed on the Lord's day. There were a few roadside capitalists, however, who broadened their minds enough to realize that people with blue hair have money just like the rest of us decent folk. As we sat in the line that seemed to go farther and farther into *Deliverance* country, I counted about sixty cars around me that were just packed full of people. An unreal amount of money is made off this fucking thing. Thanks to Lollapalooza, Perry Ferrell can afford to go swimming around under a Tahitian moon.

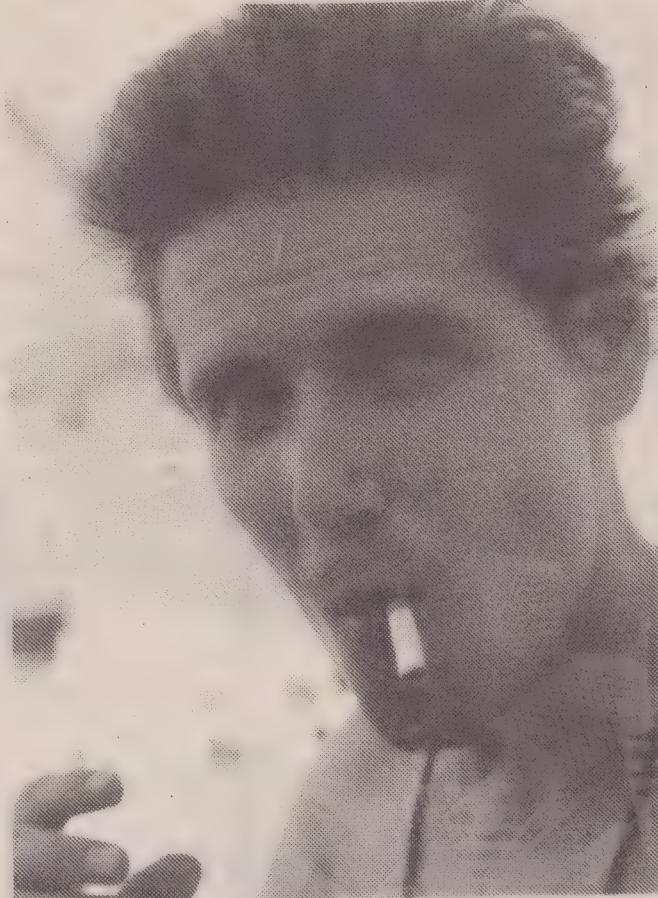
We parked the car, gathered up our goods and began standing in line at the Will Call window. This was perhaps the biggest load of bullshit that we encountered on the whole trip. Picture about 30 writers, photographers, etc., trying to get their necessary passes only to be confronted with, "I'm sorry, there's nothing I can do. Will you please step aside." Absolutely no one at this little trailer had their shit together. After waiting in line for about 20 minutes, I was told that my name could not be found for a photo-pass and I only had one comp. ticket where there should have been two. I was asked nicely to enter the next line where I waited another 20 minutes only to be told to come back in a half hour. It was my first time dealing with an event so large and I realized that if I wanted to get past those gates, I was going to have to start playing hardball. John from Varnaline had given me the band's pager number in case I had any problems but the nearest pay phone was right past the gates. I reapproached the window with the attitude that I usually reserve for smart-ass cops and I released a colorful language on the obvious temp employee, telling her that I needed to be inside immediately... or else. Or else what? I wasn't sure, but my ascertation yielded a most diligent search. Once again she apologized for not finding my name but this time, I refused to leave the window and I asked to see the list myself. On the first page that I glanced at I saw: Greg Matherly, Jersey Beat, Photo-pass + 2 comp. tickets. I was so relieved, I kept my mouth shut.

We immediately found the indie stage and hooked up with Anders, John, and Jud from Varnaline. They were getting ready to set up so we chilled out under their tent and split another brownie. The tour had been going well for them thus far except for a few troublesome things. Anders was down to one guitar that had been broken once before so he had to be really careful whilst he rocked. John, on the other hand, had been bitten by a evil tick and was on medication. Jud was healthy, didn't have a guitar to worry about, and was performing as Reservoir later on in the day in the Chill-out tent. As

everybody was running around setting things up, we took it easy for a while. The backstage tent was the Cocke county ark of the covenant: about 6 different kinds of beer, chips, salsa, bottled water, soda... a most glorious sight to behold.

Varnaline rocked. Since John and Jud joined the band, their sound has become much fuller. They now have a tight improv feel that really accentuates Anders' many emotional ventures. Man of Sin, the first Varnaline album, composed and performed solely by Anders, is a good, introspective piece of work, but the new material is poignant not only lyrically but sonically as well. Anders informed me that the new album, entitled XXX, should be out around January.

After the Varnaline set, we marched down to see the Screaming Trees. Despite the fact that they no longer sound a thing like they did on Buzz Factory (or Uncle Anesthesia for that matter), and they seem to be shooting for nothing other than radio play, they still did a decent job. Hell, what do I know, I was one of Die Kruezen's 15 fans. At least the Screaming Trees have a little more visual offering than did Die Kruezen. After all, it can be said that Mark Lanegan is quite proficient in the moves, mannerisms, and wardrobe of the late and overemphasized Jim Morrison.



**Shannon of The Cows takes the pause that refreshes.**

Melvins is enough to make your hair resemble the fireworks display atop King Buzzo's head. I got a chance to talk with the boys and they had a few changes to make to Lollapalooza.

#### **Dale Crover and Mark D.'s Submission of Alterations for Lollapalooza '97:**

##### **For the bands**

To be held indoors.  
Large air-conditioned dressing rooms.  
Bands will make \$250,000 a gig.

##### **For the fans**

A branding tent.  
A dunking tent.  
A spot-the-witch contest.

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 Alien Sex Fiend/ Too Much Acid  
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 Angelic Upstarts / Reason Why?  
 Anti-Pasti/ Caution to the Wind  
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These classic punk and oi CDs now available at an exclusive domestic price. We also carry heaps of import and domestic punk, ska, oi and in fact any radical r'n'r type stuff: vinyl, CD, mags, video, T-shirts...

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 One Way System / Best of...  
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 Riot Squad / Complete Punk Collection  
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*Vibrators / Guilty- Alaska 127  
 Vibrators / Meltdown- Vicious Circle  
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The Shaolin Monks were interesting but not in the manner that seemed to be intended. What really piqued my curiosity was not the form of movement in their kung-fu like dance, it wasn't the discipline required in ignoring the pain of having a concrete block shattered on your back while leaning into a knife, and it wasn't the speech given on all the long, hard work and spiritual control that these monks devote their life to. What I thought was so astonishing was the fact that they were on tour with a major rock-n-roll event and they were behaving in much the same manner as Jimmy Page did in the mid-seventies. Pure showmanship. There was no humility to be found upon the huge risers and no explanation of why this was so. Their parading around like rock stars was a pompous effect that, along with the *Enigma* soundtrack, rendered the whole act artificial and questioned the validity of the Monks themselves. Not only was the event sickening for me to see, it was apparently not digesting too well with the masses, as they occasionally drowned out the monks by chanting, "Rancid, Rancid, Rancid..." I guess someone was trying to tell them something.

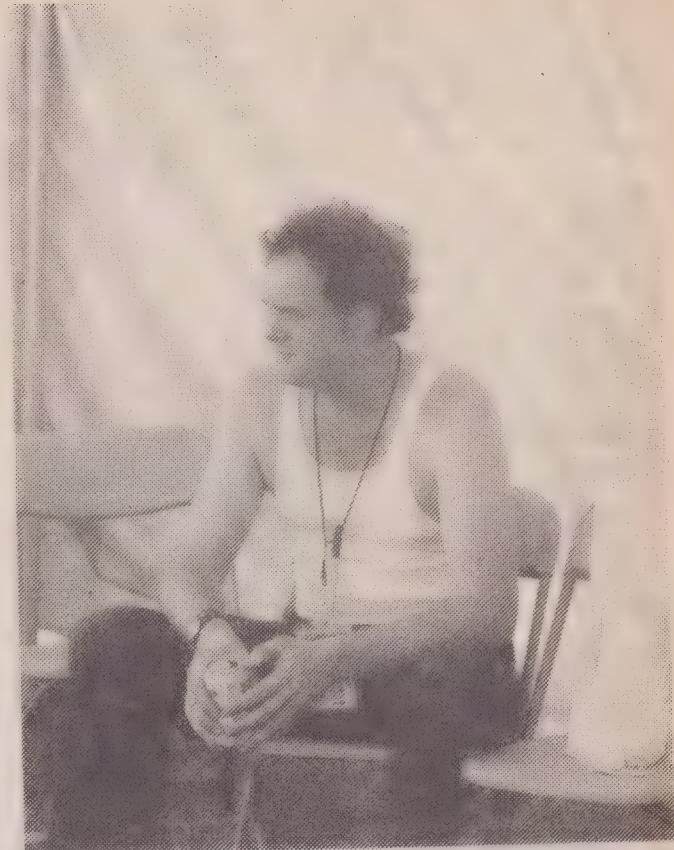
After the monks retreated to the green room, we cruised cuisine row. I was high as a kite, drunk as a skunk, and hungry as an ox. A really good thing about Lollapalooza is the attention that has been paid to the stomach. Thailand, China, Louisiana, India, and Coney Island were all represented among the line of smoking huts. We chose one of the many Asian strains and sat under the blistering sun and shoveled it in as fast as we could. It's kind of funny that with all of the eloquent displays of foreign culture, it is next to impossible to enjoy your food. If you're not used to eating while standing amidst a multitude of people who are bumping you to and fro or if you haven't had experience dodging feet and swinging your plate, you will definitely go hungry. Although there was no pleasure involved with our meal, it did satisfy our grumbly interiors and we only spent \$6. Unbelievable. That was the extent of our spending while at the show.

Rancid came riding out on bicycles prepared to give the crowd a 90's dose of early 80's punk. They whipped through their set, making sure they played all the crowd pleasers. At one point, Tim Armstrong said, "I'd like to thank the greatest band in the world. If it wasn't for them, we {Rancid} wouldn't be here right now." I thought for sure that he was going to finally confess and give The Clash some credit, but he kept the game going and thanked the Ramones instead. They jumped off the stage as quickly as they came on and we waited patiently for the quintessential punk gurus.

The Ramones were just the Ramones and hot damn, it was great. They played all of the songs that made them great and a few that didn't, but that doesn't matter. I don't think that there is a Ramones song that's bad, there are just those you'd rather hear. They're still playing "Pet Cemetery," which is especially funny when you look out over a few thousand people who are passionately agreeing that, they too do not want to be buried in a pet cemetery. One of my big regrets is missing them countless times when Dee Dee was still in the band. Oh, well. I still saw the gods of rock-n-roll and they said, "we accept you, one of us."

It was back up to the indie stage for the Cows. Their set was as dissonant and crazed as vocalist Shannon's thought process. Wearing a sailor's uniform and a strap-on hand dildo, he led the other Cows through a 50 minute set of high strung weirdness which culminated in a bloody display of ears affixed to nipples via jumper cables. If that doesn't win you over, you have to respect a man who can guzzle straight vodka, play two trumpets at once, and stand on his head in front of a 5-minute wall of noise.

Soul Coughing was going on after the Cows and Rage Against the Machine hit the big stage so I figured it was a good time to walk around and check out all the wares and modern definitions of hip. My comrades agreed so we were off. Most of the vendor stands



Anders of Varnaline hurries up and waits

were full of drug paraphernalia, big hats, jewelry, T-shirts, and more drug paraphernalia. It's ironic that marijuana is considered to be a lot less harmful than tobacco and weed is illegal but you can buy a 10ft. bong under the pretense that it's a tobacco pipe. Show me anyone who seems half-way interested in smoking tobacco out of a steamroller or a bong. Strange times indeed.

Jud was doing his cough syrup friendly *Reservoir* drone in the Chill-Out Tent while there was an S & M exhibition taking place, but the line to get in was a lot longer than my curiosity. We opted instead to make a pit stop at the county fire truck and cool off with a ten-pound, soaking wet T-shirt. On the way back to the indie area for more beverages, I saw Soundgarden's Ben Shepherd. I asked if he would mind answering a few questions for Jersey Beat and he crossed his arms, scowled, looked away and said, "Sure. Make it quick." He was a complete and total dick. What's wrong with saying, "No, thank you" or, "Not now, I'm a little busy". I guess you don't have to be nice when your on MTV.

I used to be a big fan of Soundgarden. I still think that Ultra-Mega O.K. is a damn good album but boy do these guys bite the big one now! Soundgarden played every hit off of the last 3 albums and nothing else. They didn't even go back as far as Louder Than Love which, I think, is the beginning of a long line of shit. If it didn't have a video, Soundgarden didn't play it. Kurt Cobain is dead, Soundgarden sucks, and who knows what the fuck is up with Mudhoney... Seattle has lost its crown.

It finally started to rain as the sun was going down. By the time Metallica walked on stage I thought we were a little closer to the ocean than what I had remembered. The wind was streaming down

# LOLLAPALOOZA

torrents of cool rain and I could swear we were in for a hurricane. Then Metallica did something a lot more respectable than Soundgarden: they opened with the old Anti-Nowhere League song, *So What* and backed it up with *Creeping Death*, an equally old original. Now I know there was a big stink over Metallica playing Lollapalooza and I can see the argument, but they were one of the few bands on the tour this year that really held true to their original form. They were honest and ready to have a good time. Their set included as many old as it did new. If there has to be an argument as to who should not be playing with the biggest summertime tour because they aren't punk enough, alternative enough, or whatever, there also needs to be a reevaluation of standards. Although I don't plan on buying Metallica's new album, in my book, they put on a hell of a better show than did Soundgarden, Rancid, Rage Against the Machine, and the Shaolin Monks just because of the simple fact that there was no pretense involved. And Metallica's stage presence was no where near as contrived as that of Soul Coughing, Sponge, and Psychotica. Also, I don't see a bunch of people bitching about where their money was going. Tickets at the gate were \$42. Shouldn't that be a big question? Metallica was good and everybody loved them.

Christy, Keith and I hit the road for home with a feeling of fulfillment. I ate my choice words for Lollapalooza but I do believe that free beer, shade, and all access had a lot to do with my late night snack of retraction. We had a good time. We had a damn good time. The mix of bands was not as bad as I had imagined and I might even consider attending next year. If I'm on Warner Brothers by then.

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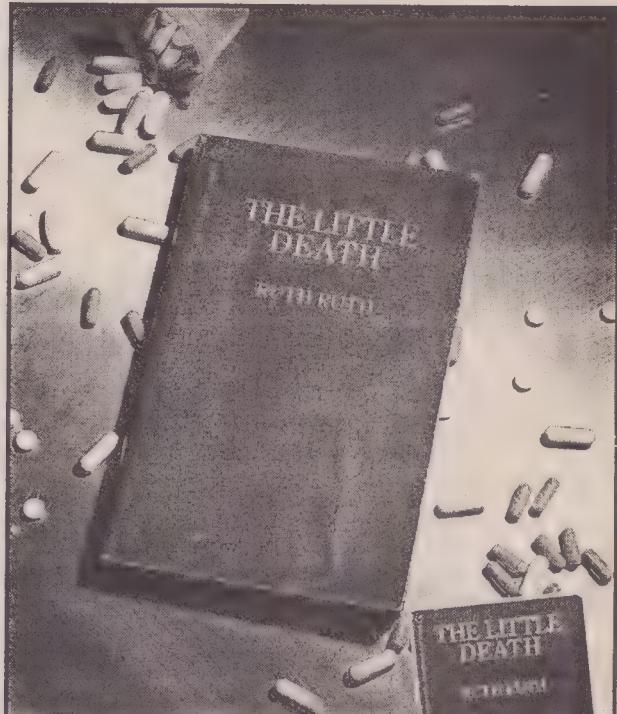
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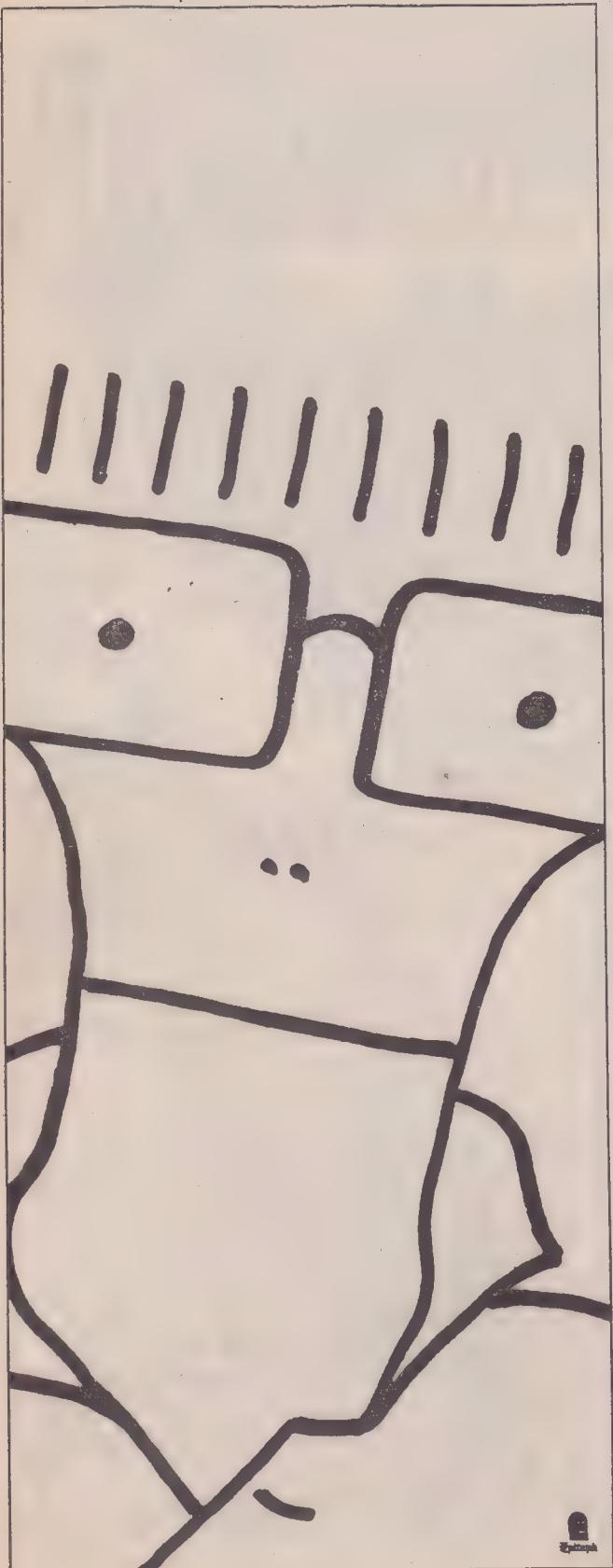
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*Four-eyed nerds everywhere, rejoice! The godfathers of Pop/Punk, The Descendents, are back. Original lead singer Milo Aukerman has rejoined bandmates Bill Stevenson, Stephen Egerton, and Karl Alvarez for a new album on Epitaph Records and a planned tour in December.*

*As founding fathers of L.A.'s hardcore-punk scene in the late Seventies, the Descendents' catchy, roughshod tunes celebrated retarded adolescence and caffeine addiction, turning Aukerman's geeky glasses and gangly frame into an enduring punk icon. When Aukerman left the band to pursue his graduate degree, the remaining three members morphed into ALL, continuing on with a series of other singers.*

*But when ALL was dropped by Interscope Records earlier this year, Stevenson went to Epitaph's Brett Gurewitz and suggested the label pick them up. Gurewitz agreed, but only after inveigling Stevenson to throw a new Descendents LP into the deal. Here's an interview I did on July 23 with Descendents' lead singer Milo Aukerman. - Jim Testa*

## Descendents Reunite As Milo Comes Back From College

Q: Do I call you Dr. Aukerman now?

Milo: No, in my field, we don't go in for that. If you're not a medical doctor, I don't think people should have to call you doctor.

Q: But you do have a Ph.D.?

Milo: Yes, in Biochemistry.

Q: So tell me how this reunion happened.

Milo: Well, I've been loosely associated with the guys in All for the last couple of years. I've been checking out new songs they'd written, just to give my opinion. I guess you could say I was sort of a consultant. But I wasn't involved with making or writing music in any way because I was so busy doing my own thing in science. Only recently, in the last six to eight months, I started writing music again. And I was really getting jazzed on this idea that I could pursue my career in science and still make music. So I started writing these songs by myself. Then, it was almost like some sort of ESP thing, just when I was really getting into music again, Bill (Stevenson, All and the Descendents' drummer) called and asked if I'd be interested in getting back together. We had talked about this in the past, but I had always told Bill that I was too distracted by my studies to devote time to doing a band again. But this time the timing was perfect, so in the Spring of this year, we started really pursuing this full on.

Q: What exactly is your commitment to the Descendents

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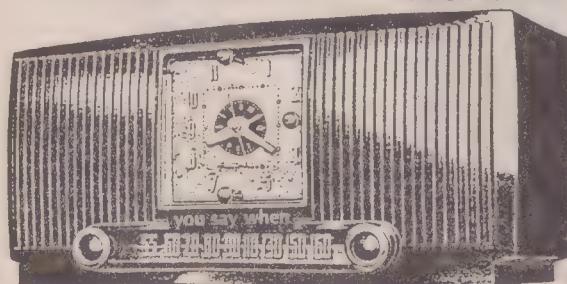
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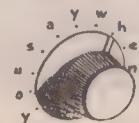
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at this point?

Milo: We talked this over very carefully and agreed that we (the Descendents) would be making music together and we'd promote it by touring, but ALL would remain a full-fledged entity. It's just that Bill, Stefan, and Karl would take some time off from ALL to do the Descendents for a while, but with the knowledge that eventually they would go back to being ALL full-time at some later point.

Q: Have you thought about what it's going to be like getting on stage again and singing "I Don't Want To Grow Up" now that you're in your mid-thirties?

Milo: There's a definite stubbornness on our part not to grow up, so songs like "I Don't Want To Grow Up" are still going to be relevant. A

big part of playing this kind of music is denying the years. The main thing is getting on stage and doing it, and if you get really amped, it doesn't matter if you're 14 or 40. What matters is the music.

Q: Have you been aware of the enduring influence and popularity that the Descendents have enjoyed? You can go to any punk show today and there'll be a bunch of kids there in Descendents t-shirts who are way too young to have heard you when you were still together.

Milo: It's been a very recent awareness for me. Mostly I've become aware of it because of the Internet. That's how these kids can reach me and how I can hear from them about how much the Descendents have meant to them. It's really been a great feeling coming to realize that we did make an enduring contribution and our music still matters to a lot of people.

Q: Bill Stevenson has been very vocal in recent years about how he feels younger bands like Green Day have ripped off his musical ideas. How do you feel about it?

Milo: I'm not quite as angry about it as Bill because I haven't been out there in the trenches all these years. My feeling is that we certainly have influenced a lot of other bands, just as we were influenced by, say, the Buzzcocks. My feeling has always been that there's a certain punk ethic to this, a certain acknowledgement. As long as you promote the music, it's okay. If these bands are going to say to kids, "Look, if you like us, there are a lot of other bands that we used to listen to that you should check out," then that's fine. But I don't think a lot of these new bands are doing that.

Q: There was a very different spirit when the Descendents started, when you and bands like Black Flag and the Angry Samoans had this sort of "anything goes" mentality and you could pretty much say whatever you wanted in your lyrics. There was this idea that as long as it was all in fun, it was okay. That spirit really doesn't exist today.

Milo: I agree with you. I've done a certain amount of growing up myself so I'm at least more sensitive now to certain groups who are feeling trod upon. Let's face it, there are a lot of our lyrics that have not aged well. Calling someone today "a stupid homo" doesn't mean what it meant when I was in high school. I used to get picked on all the time, and the bigger guys would either call you an asshole or a homo. People today don't relate to that. But you gotta learn to have a thick skin too. And if you can't take a joke... I do think this political correctness thing has gotten out of hand. If you're just making a joke and it's not...

Q: Malicious?

Milo: Exactly. As long as it's not malicious, I think there is a basic freedom of speech and you should be able to say what you want. So I don't want to just cave in to the PC thing, but I also think that we've grown up ourselves and we do realize that some of our old lyrics might be objectionable today.

Q: But you're still going to do the old Descendents songs when you tour?

Milo: Oh sure, I think it will be a good mix. We have all those great old songs and we've written a lot of great new songs too.

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# Lawyers, Punks, And Money

by Jim Testa

The idea was to interview Ben Weasel about Screeching Weasel's new album on Fat WreckChords.

"Why don't we start with how you went from doing a second Riverdales record for Lookout to winding up with a new Screeching Weasel record on Fat?" I asked.

It seemed like a simple enough question. Little did I know.

The details that followed - 45 minutes worth, as it turned out - sucked me into a black hole of greed, paranoia, and money, a tale of anger and frustration, lawyers and contracts, broken friendships, and lost ideals... It was the kind of sick, twisted story that Hunter Thompson and Elmore Leonard might have cooked up together tanked on cheap tequila and crank. It certainly didn't seem to have much to do with punk rock.

"The thing you have to understand," Ben said, "is that it's not about money." But it's always about money.

The history: "Everybody thinks Screeching Weasel broke up in 1994 but really we broke up in 1993. After *Anthem For A New Tomorrow* came out, we did three shows to support it and I just said, fuck it, I'm not doing shows anymore. So we said we'd stay together and do another record, but basically we were broken up," Ben said.

Dan Vapid had had a falling out with the band and Screeching Weasel recorded its last album for Lookout - "basically we did it just because I had all these tunes already written and laying around," Ben said - with Green Day's Mike Dirnt filling in on bass. At that point, John Jughead left the band and Ben started making plans to start a new group with drummer Dan Panic called The Riverdales.

"A lot of people think that John and I had a fight or something, but he just had other things he wanted to do," said Ben. "He writes, directs, and produces plays, and he's enjoyed some real success in Chicago doing that. But John has been my best friend since I was in junior high. In fact, I've always said that as long as Jughead and I were involved, it would be Screeching Weasel regardless of whoever else came and went. If either one of us left, then it wouldn't be Screeching Weasel anymore."

The original Riverdales that Ben conceived was inspired by his infatuation with the Fastbacks. "I wanted it to be a trio, and I wanted to have a girl on bass and singing at least half the songs," he said.

But when that didn't work out, Dan Vapid came over with some songs he had written. "Vapid just started playing these amazing Dee Dee Ramone type songs that he had, and Panic and I talked and decided right away that we wanted him in the Riverdales singing those songs with us."

Flash forward to December, 1995: The Riverdales had just returned from touring as the opening band on Green Day's *Insomniac* tour. "The tour was kind of a disaster, not in the usual sense of a tour

being a disaster, but just that we had never toured for that long a period of time and there was a lot of tension in the band," Ben recalls. Part of the problem was that Ben and the rest of the group had been disappointed in Lookout's inability to fulfill its promises about promoting the band on the road.

"We weren't getting any press," Ben said. "I don't mean *Rolling Stone* wasn't coming out to see us. I mean fanzines weren't coming out to see us. We played Nassau Coliseum in front of a soldout crowd and there was no press there. We'd play to 11,000 people in our home town and there was no press. They had blown it when we were in Europe, and they admitted that, and they promised us it wouldn't happen again, and it did. So we were really demoralized about that."

So when it came time to negotiate an advance for the second Riverdales album, Ben said, he asked for \$150,000. "To be honest, I was so pissed about the tour that I asked for a really admittedly unreasonable amount of money. It wasn't like I expected them to give us \$150,000, I just wanted them to be pissed and outraged."

Things cooled down and talks resumed, but nothing was really the same... or could be. Not after spending time on the road with a multi-platinum selling band playing arenas. "I learned a lot from that tour, and the thing I learned most is that when you're an independent band on a label like Lookout or Fat WreckChords that are not into bribing people or doing a lot of sleazy things, you can't win. The biggest thing I learned is that if you're not in with the big boys, it doesn't matter how good you are, you just can't win."

Ben notes that all along during the Riverdales period, the band had been hearing a familiar refrain. Lookout's Lawrence Livermore as well as a lot of the band's friends would say, "Why are you doing this? Why aren't you doing Screeching Weasel?" When the advance for the next Riverdales album became an issue, Ben said, "people at the label started saying, why don't you just do a new Screeching Weasel album and we could pay you a lot of money and everybody would be happy."

On top of that, Rev. Norb had asked if Screeching Weasel might



## Fear & loathing in Riverdale, or how **SCREECHING WEASEL** found happiness by getting Fat

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Punk Bands Reviving 80's Metal Sweetness

want to get back together and re-record their version of the Ramones *Leave Home*. That planted the seed of Screeching Weasel reuniting, if only for one recording, especially after Jughead said he'd be into doing it.

"That sort of spurred the whole thing on, and then Chris (Appelgren) at Lookout saying we could probably make a lot more money did as well, so basically the reason we got back together is because we thought we could make a lot of money. And in the beginning of this year, I was just getting really freaked about money. We weren't making as much, and we had lost a lot of money on the Green Day tour. Plus my girlfriend had quit her job and started freelancing, and because of that, I wound up paying most of the bills. Which was fine, because earlier, when I wasn't making a lot of money from the band, she paid most of the bills. So I was very supportive of her, but it got to be a little harder to make ends meet. And then on top of all that, I got into this thing where I started wanting to buy a house. So with all this together, we decided to get back together as Screeching Weasel."

The band went to California for a face to face meeting with the Lookout people and resolved a lot of the bad feelings that had cropped up during the Riverdales tour. At the end of those meetings, Ben said, "Basically, we left feeling we could all work together and we started to get to work on Screeching Weasel. And that's where things started to go bad. Because for the next four and a half months, it was just a nightmare."

What followed, according to Ben, was a hellish cascade of negotiations and legal bickering, starting with a 14-page contract that renegotiated terms for the Screeching Weasel albums that had already been released on Lookout. At that point, still trusting Lookout's good intentions, Ben said the band signed that contract and mailed it back without even showing it to a lawyer.

"Then when it came time to do the new agreement, they sent us another contract, which was a basic contract because we hadn't settled on numbers yet, and in big letters on there was a statement saying 'You acknowledge that we have advised you to get a lawyer...' and blah blah blah, and me and John sat down and said to each other, maybe we should get a lawyer."

The band's change of heart was at least partly inspired by the way that the legal situation had changed at the label. "Lookout, up to that point, had had this guy that they went to sometimes but they didn't really have a lawyer," Ben said. "Now all of a sudden they've got this guy who's in charge of Janis Joplin's estate, for God's sakes. We started to get a little paranoid, and we figured we needed to get a lawyer too. If only to deal with all these things that should have been dealt with years ago, nothing to do with Lookout but just inter-band things."

The lawyer Screeching Weasel hired didn't like the Lookout contract. "They said it was the most artist-unfriendly contract they'd ever seen," Ben said, "which we at first dismissed, because we figured they had to say that, since it was their job. They make their money by telling us that the other guy is trying to screw up. So I took it with a big grain of salt. We had been doing fine with Lookout for five years, they'd always been honest with us, and it was not an issue. So I told the lawyer to back off on all that stuff."

But things broke down when Lookout and the band started talking about money. Ben said he started by asking for \$80,000 and a three record deal, then talked about a one record deal, without being able to reach an agreement.

"Then what really pissed me off, because they don't have this with any of their other contracts, was a confidentiality clause, which said that I couldn't talk about any of the terms of the contract," Ben

said. "Which was a really sore point with me, because as you know, I like to be open about my business and I'm not afraid to talk about numbers, and I don't want to hide anything. I'm fucking paranoid about hiding things. I think people who are sincere and have supported us have a right to know how we do our business, and I don't think we have any right to hide that from them. So I was really uncomfortable signing anything like that. And the sole reason, Larry told me flat out, was that he didn't want any of the other bands on the label to know what we were getting paid because he was scared that other bands would start asking for the same thing. And I said, Larry, what do you care, you're a millionaire? And he said, 'well, I know this is probably hard for you to believe, and I know you might not understand it, but a million dollars isn't what it used to be.' And at that point, I came to the conclusion that Larry Livermore was no longer the guy I met in 1988 and whose label I signed to in 1991, and that we lived in very different worlds."

To make a long story short, after four and a half months the band still didn't have an agreement with Lookout. They had started recording the new album and Ben and John were using their own money to pay for the studio time.

"I just poured everything I had into this record," Ben said.

"Including my savings account. I'm not saying this to be a sob story, I'm just saying that we were working under the assumption that this contract would be worked out and we'd get our money. But the nice thing is that because we weren't constrained by budget limitations, we were able to spend the money and time on the record that we had always wanted to."

By late July, the album was almost finished, the band's legal fees were getting out of hand, and there still wasn't a deal. "It was taking a toll on the band too," Ben said. "There were days in the studio where you could just look at everybody's face and it was like the life had been sucked out of them."

When it started to become clear that the band wasn't going to be able to stay on Lookout, Ben started making phone calls. "I called Fat Mike (at Fat Wreck Chords) because I didn't have anywhere else to go," he said. "I didn't know anything about them and to be honest, I had really a bad impression, the same way a lot of people feel about that label - just that it's cheesy and that they're probably shady. I don't know why I felt that way, I just thought it was a junior Epitaph. I found out very quickly it wasn't."

"In fifteen minutes, Fat Mike and I negotiated the contract, and he told his lawyer what to put in it. We got our money, and... Larry had always told me that if we ever went to another label, we might get a big advance but no one was going to pay us as much (royalties) as what Lookout was paying us. So I told Mike straight out. He said, what do you

want to get paid for royalties, and I said, I don't know, but I know you can't pay what Lookout pays. And he said, Oh, I think I can. And he ended up paying us more per year than Lookout does."

"Let me put it this way. I read in the papers a while ago about this big blockbuster deal that R.E.M. signed, and they quoted the royalty rate that they get paid and talked about what a huge, unprecedented royalty rate that is. Well, that's what we're getting paid."

With Fat Wreck Chords' money, Screeching Weasel finished the album, got the art work done, and so far, Ben said, "my experiences with Fat have been great. But meantime, things have really broken down with Lookout."

After the contract talks fell apart, another disagreement came up about how Lookout nets out its expenses before paying royalties to its artists. It came to the point where Screeching Weasel demanded its

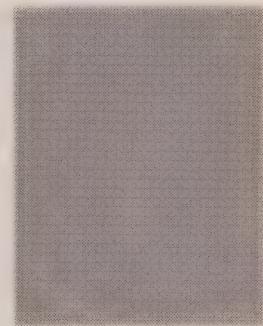


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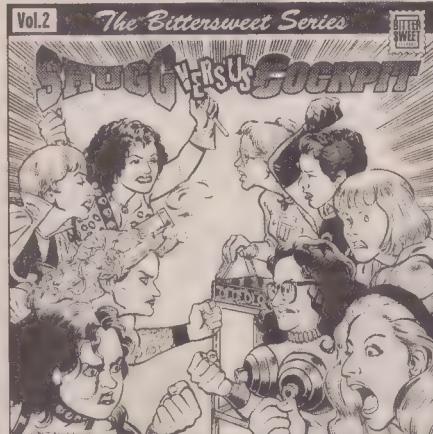
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back catalog back and Lookout's response, according to Ben, was, "Sue us."

"Because of their accounting system, we not only get paid a different rate on every album, but we get paid a different rate every quarter on every album," Ben said. "So we said we wanted a flat rate. And we want it to be an average, so we're not getting paid more or less, we're getting an average. And we wanted them to get a new distributor, because Mordam sucks. Mordam is horrible."

Eventually those talks broke down and the band decided to simply break off all communication with Lookout and have nothing to do with the label anymore. Lookout apparently didn't like that and sent letters to Ben and Jughead threatening them with a lawsuit if they didn't reopen negotiations. On top of that, the label raised the prices on Screeching Weasel's back catalog over the band's protestations. Ben said he also heard that someone had told retailers that the reason the prices went up was because "Ben wants to buy a nice little house in the suburbs."

"I don't know where they got that information, I had already given up on the house idea back in July," Ben said. "When your distributor is telling potential customers that basically you're a greedy arrogant rock star pig, it's not going to help sales, and at that point I said we had to defend ourselves publicly."

"So I said we're going to go public with it. People are talking shit about us going to Fat? Well, let me tell you a few things about Lookout Records. It's not the cool punk rock label everybody thinks it is. It's a sleazy business run by a guy who, in the very beginning, was a completely different person. Who ran the label that I was very proud to be on, that I was a cheerleader for for five years, and that I encouraged my friends to do business with. A label that really saved our ass and let us continue as a band and let us make a living off of this, which we never would have been able to do otherwise. And to see them turn into this really sleazy label... I couldn't stomach it any more. These are not the values that we share, and I don't want anything to do with the label. That's the whole reason I brought up the contract and said, hey, we want these records back, 'cause I can't stand doing business with you anymore."

"Instead, we go over to Fat. They don't ask us to sign a multi-record contract. If you like the label, you'll sign for another record. They're confident that they've got a good label. They don't have to enslave people. They don't want us to do videos, they don't want us to try and get into *Rolling Stone* and *Spin*. It's a much better label. So that's the whole saga and that's where we stand."

The question is, will anybody care about all this cutthroat behind-the-scenes stuff?

"I think it's interesting whether people think we're full of shit or not," answers Ben. "The main reason I wanted to go public with this is because I don't want people who are into the band to get the wrong impression, and when Lookout is deliberately misleading them and making it look like we're fucked up or greedy, then we have to say, hey look, at least hear our side of it. Because the people who buy our records are the ones who pay our rent. And if they think we're fucked, then okay, but at least I think they should know both sides of the story."

Ben does add that there was a bright side to all the crap. "The ironic thing is that in the midst of all this horrible stuff that was going on, I think we made a good record, and being on a new label really rejuvenated us and made us excited about the band again," he notes. "Because for the first time in a long time, we really felt like underdogs. We felt like, gee, we really have to fight to get this record out. We had to put all our own money into it. We hadn't put our own money into a record for eight, no, nine years. Back in the old days, we all worked jobs, and me and John worked these shitty jobs and put all our money into the band. And it sort of felt like that in a way. Obviously, things are different, we're a much bigger band now and we're on a big record label, but it did something for our sense of camaraderie anyway, and it was a real shot in the arm. We haven't been on the label long enough to tell anyone that this is a great label and your band or anybody's band should go sign to it. About a year from now I'll be able to give an opinion. But so far, it's all been great."

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# Boogada, Boogada, Boogada... Boogada

## Ben Weasel on the new album, touring, and making music

Record deals, contracts, lawyers... Do you really care about any of that stuff? You read Jersey Beat to find out about music, right? So here's where we talked to Ben Weasel about writing songs, going on tour, and rediscovering his enthusiasm for being in Screeching Weasel again. And a lot of other stuff too.... - Jim Testa

Q: Let's talk about the new record a little. I think you mentioned that two of the songs were written before you even knew you were going to be Screeching Weasel again?

'You're fat and ugly and an imbecile too,  
And that's why they draw funny pictures of you  
And talk bad about all the kids  
'Cause it's a real cool club, and you're not part of it'  
from 'Cool Kids'

Ben: Actually, three. "The First Day Of Summer" and "It's Not Enough" were actually going to be Riverdales tunes originally. And there was one other tune, which is the last song on the album ("Your Name Is Tattooed On My Heart,") which I wrote on tour with the Riverdales, and we actually did it in soundcheck with the Riverdales one night. To me, it didn't really fit the Riverdales, and it didn't really fit Screeching Weasel either, but I thought it fit Screeching Weasel better. And so I said, well, let's do it with Screeching Weasel. Most of the new tunes were a case where we got back together and I had this massive surge of energy, and I wrote maybe all but one of them in one big burst over a four-day stand. I just get that way sometimes where I get inspired and just write a ton of shit. And actually there are four other tunes that aren't on the record, which will be coming out on an EP next year, hopefully on Vermiform.

Q: The song that everybody seems to really like is "Cool Kids."

Ben: That was one where I was really stoked. I gotta tell you, the first Screeching Weasel practice I went to, I was really depressed. I felt like I was taking a huge step backwards. I felt like a jerk. I felt like I should be moving ahead, not going back. But by the second rehearsal, I was really into it. And I realized that I'll probably never again in my life play with a group of guys who so intuitively understand my songwriting. I know I write very simple tunes, and they're very simple to play. Any musician will tell you that. But I've had so many different band members, people who were only around for a short time, attempt to work with me. And they were usually all really good musicians. Much better musicians than we have. But they just didn't get it. But the guys in Screeching Weasel just know where I'm going before I even get there.

Q: In all fairness, I don't think you've ever had a drummer as good as Danny Panic.

Ben: Oh, absolutely. As far as talent goes, he's probably the best drummer in punk rock. But when it comes to guitar playing, me and Vapid and Jughead are weak at best. None of us are very good. But

what's more important is that they have a feel for a good tune. So when I wrote "Cool Kids," I was just really stoked. It was one of the only tunes I've ever written where I just sat down and wrote the words and music at the same time.

Q: I was thinking a lot about "Cool Kids." Because here you are in the middle of the most adult shit in your life, all this crap with lawyers and contracts and more money that you probably ever dreamed you'd be dealing with, and you write this great song that comes directly out of the mind of a junior high school kid.

Ben: Well, that's, uh, arrested development? (laughs) But really, the song's not like that. It's a tune that a kid in junior high or high school can totally relate to, but it's also a tune that at my age, I can totally relate to it, and probably at your age, you can relate to it too. I mean, high school sucks, and being a teenager, without a doubt, is the worst time of your life. I haven't gotten old yet, so being old might be worse, but so far, I can say that being a teenager is the worst. And

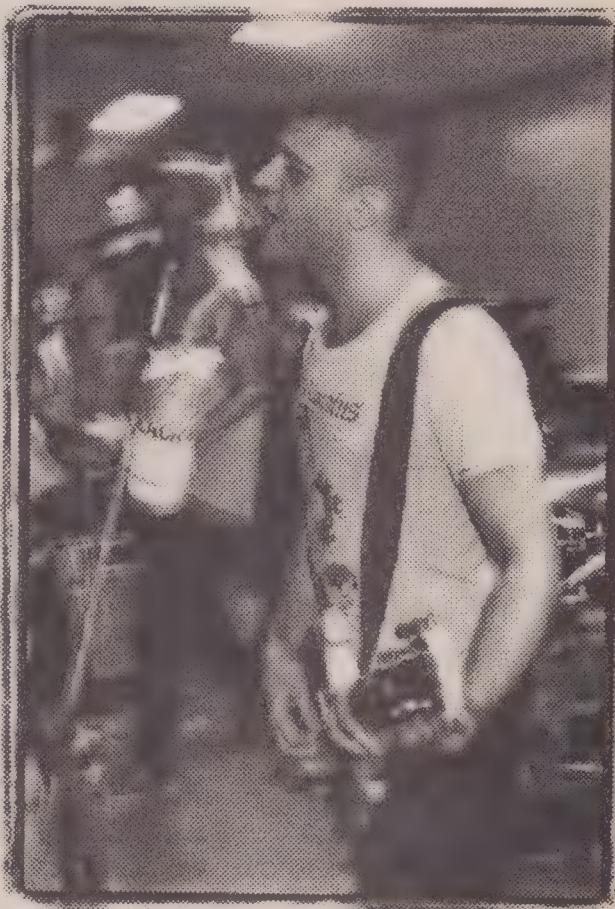


Photo by Shawn Scallen



it does get better, but some things don't change. And being alienated, and feeling like you don't belong, and feeling that other people are snickering at you and laughing at your behind your back, I mean, I feel that all the time. Not as much as anybody does when they're in school, but I still feel that. And it still infuriates me more than anything else.

I used to be a lot more pissed off than I am now. But that's one of a very small number of things that still fucking infuriates me, is when people treat me like that, or when I see other people getting treated like that. And I don't know why. I never really got picked on in high school, and in junior high, I was a terror. I was picking on other people. In high school, I was just a burnout. But I've always felt alienated, and I don't know if other people feel that way as much as I do, but I think everybody feels alienated and left out sometimes. And I'll tell you something, that song came out of a very specific experience in my adult life. So I don't think it matters. I think that whole age thing... youth does not have an exclusive claim on alienation and frustration and hostility and confusion and all that stuff. This is not the exclusive property of kids.

Q: The other thing is that you've been in a great relationship with the same woman since I've known you...

Ben: Ten years.

Q: Right. And you still write a lot of really nasty songs about women.

Ben: Aw, come on!

Q: I'm not saying that you don't also write a lot of very sunny love songs. There have always been happy Screeching Weasel songs and pissed off Screeching Weasel songs. I'm just wondering what inspires the angry ones.

Ben: Well, they're not about Portia, if that's what you're after. (laughs) Look, this is what I do. If I write a song about somebody, nine times out of ten I make it a girl, whether it's really a girl I'm writing about or not. Because nobody wants to hear songs about boys. Even girl bands don't sing songs about boys. Because nobody wants to hear that. Boys are jerks. Nobody wants to idolize or romanticize boys by putting them in songs, because that's what you do when you write a song about someone, you romanticize them. And when you write about a specific person, whether it starts out as a boy or a girl, you put it in the context of a relationship. Now, not all

your relationships with women are not romantic. You just put it in that context. Because basically, all these songs about love are just good rhyming words. And sometimes there are times I'll just write songs about stuff I remember from when I was a teenager.

Q: Do you have an audience in mind when you write songs?

Ben: Yeah, of course, you have to.

Q: Do you conceptualize that audience as being younger than you are at this point?

Ben: Hmm... Yes and no. Yes, but I don't write for them.

Q: I certainly don't think you write down to your audience.

Ben: That's what I was getting at. I don't write for them (kids,) I write for people my own age. And luckily, I think, younger people can still totally relate to it, because like I said, basically I'm just an arrested fucking juvenile delinquent. But particularly with this new album, I'm not going to try and get the kids into something. And I certainly hope it doesn't come across as being pandering.

I thought (with "Cool Kids") the whole idea was funny, that a 28-year old man would write a tune like that. Because it doesn't really matter if you're wearing suits or walking around with briefcases or whatever, basically you're a bunch of snotty kids. It wasn't written for high school kids, it was written for people my age. There's another tune, "Get Off My Back," that was written about a specific person, and then after playing it a few times, I decided it was about another person. So even I don't know who it's about anymore.

Even when we were teenagers, I don't think we were specifically writing for teenagers. Because I was 19 when our first album came out. It's funny, at the time, 19 seemed to be really fucking old to be having your first album come out. Vapid was in this band called Generation Waste when he was only 15. So I thought I was really old at 19 to be having my first band. What changed it all for me was a few years later, when I was about 22 or 23, Aaron Cometbus told me, because me and him are the same age, and he told me, you know, I don't feel bad about anything I haven't accomplished yet, because the Ramones didn't put out their first album until they were all about 24. So I figured, at 24, they did *Ramones*; at 25, *Leave Home*; and at the time I was only 22 or 23, so I felt really good about myself then. Of course, I don't know where that leaves me now.

Q: One of the things we talked about a couple of years ago was how

'My friends are getting famous,  
They're all on MTV  
Interviews in Rolling Stone,  
And I'm in Jersey Beat'

from "My Friends Are Getting Famous"

# MY CHILD IS AN HONOR STUDENT AT SCREECHING WEASEL HIGH SCHOOL



you felt you were getting caught up in your own image... That so many kids were confusing the real you with the "Ben Weasel" they heard on records and read in *Maximum Rock N Roll* that you felt as if you were losing your identity. Now that you don't have the column in *Maximum* anymore and you're keeping a much lower profile, do you think that will change?

Ben: It seems to be carrying over, so far. I wanted a lot of that crap to die down. It really comes down to the fact that I'm just a baby. I used a lot of that stuff to my advantage, and then when it became uncomfortable, I didn't want it anymore. Which is traditional rock-star baby behavior, and I should be spanked. I can't help how I feel, it just got really irritating. To the point where at the time, I said that I felt like a cartoon character. And I actually was a cartoon character, for John Crawford and for that guy who did the cartoons for you in *Jersey Beat* [Wheeler.] I don't think it's died down, but I don't see it that much, because I keep a lower profile. I don't keep in contact with a lot of people, I don't go to shows, I don't read *Maximum* anymore, so I'm shielded from that. And that's what I need to do. Because if I get into something, I have a tendency to really get into it and get really upset. I used to find myself getting into the middle of things, into arguments, just for the sake of getting into it. And in the past two years, I don't find myself doing that anymore. I'm much better now at doing what I've always appreciated in other people, which is to say, "You know what? I don't wanna get involved." Because I always wanted to get involved. And now I'm past that.

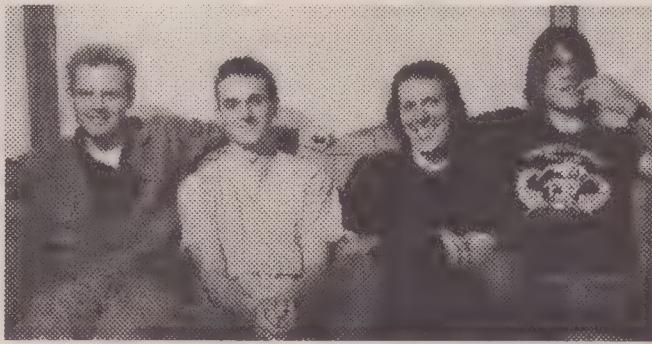
Q: It doesn't seem the music is as confrontational as it used to be either. At least the songs on the new album.

Ben: I don't know about that.

Q: I'm talking about songs like "I Wanna Be A Homosexual," which was definitely knocking the chip off a certain kind of shoulder that used to exist in the hardcore scene.

Ben: We should have done that song a year earlier. But yeah, okay, I see what you mean.

Q: So do you still want to do that with your songs? Confront some of the complacency and fucked up attitudes that you see around you? The new songs, a lot of them are really happy and some of them are kind of pissed off, but I don't get the feeling that you're tilting at windmills anymore.



## Screeching Weasel Facts

1. Ben's latest obsession is IHL Hockey, specifically the Chicago Wolves. He has season tickets and is even publishing a newsletter called "Blood On The Ice" chronicling the team's season.

2. Screeching Weasel had a tour booked for December but decided to cancel it, even after receiving offers of \$1500 guarantees. "The money was very flattering, but I'm just not into the idea of getting on stage in front of people, and I just can't pretend," Ben said. "And I don't think it's fair to ask people to pay to see a band if the band, especially the singer, isn't into it."

3. Screeching Weasel doesn't have an email address but there's a very cool Unofficial Weasel Web Page at: <http://www.ecst.csuchico.edu/~dalporto/weasel.htm>

Ben: No, and I can't, because... you know what my problem is? I think too much. And one of the things I think about is, who am I? Well, I'm a 28-year old guy who hasn't had to work a job in five years, and I make my living off playing music. What the fuck do I have to complain about? When you think about it, people go out to shows and they buy records, and they want to be entertained. And I don't find it entertaining to hear some millionaire rock star like these Smashing Pumpkins guys go out there and whine. I know better than most people that having money does not get rid of your problems. And your life is not perfect just because you have money. But having money does make those problems a million times easier

to deal with, and anyone who denies that is a fucking liar. Everyone has to acknowledge at some point that they have problems, but I don't think I have the right - or the need - to bitch about my problems. People don't want to hear that crap. Because everybody has their cross to bear, and I don't see why mine should be any more important just because I'm able to articulate it into a song. To me, it's arrogance to take that attitude. On the other hand, if I do feel pissed off at something and want to put it in a song, I'm not going to stop myself. I just don't feel that need as much anymore.

Q: People probably don't realize that you almost never go out to see bands anymore.

Ben: I haven't gone out to see a show in two and a half years. Aside from watching bands that I've played with. Even when my friends come to town, I don't go out. And that's primarily because I don't want to get involved with the Chicago punk scene. It got to the point where I would go to shows and just be bugged like crazy. I couldn't pay attention to the music and I just got mad. So I stopped going out.

Q: You haven't seen a lot of this first hand, but the biggest thing that pisses me off these days are these kids who come to shows and have no idea of how to have a good time. And the other thing is the attitude of certain bands who don't want to acknowledge that they're playing in front of an audience for money, who seem to think that "entertainment" is a dirty word.

Ben: Well, I totally acknowledge that you have to entertain people. That's the whole reason we're doing this... As far as the crowd goes, with these new kids, you can only blame them so much. Because the older people who have been around, they're setting the tone. And if the older people are not setting the tone in a way that lets people know that they don't have to look cool, that they can jump around and act like an idiot - and I mean that in as positive a sense as possible - then how can you blame these MTV kids? They have to learn somehow. None of us was born with a mohawk. You learn how to loosen up and have fun at a show by being amongst people who do that. So if the older people are coming to shows and just standing around acting all jaded and stuff, then that's what the younger people are going to pick up on.

# Silent Majority

## Long Island Emo Pop Core

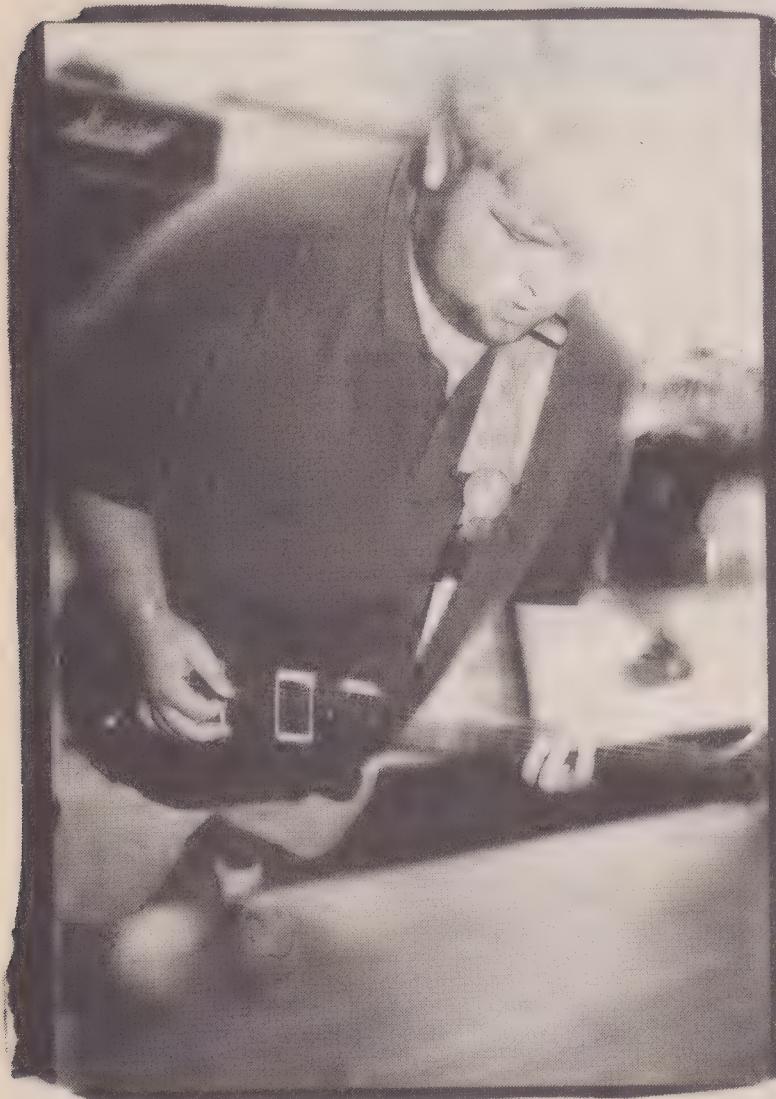


Photo by Justin Borucki

By John Lisa

*Silent Majority was interviewed at a YMCA show over the summer. Paul, the bassist, was in Clockwise; otherwise, this is every one's first band.*

Tom - vocals  
Ryan - guitar  
Rich - guitar  
Ben - drums  
Paul - bass

Q: Where did the name Silent Majority come from?

Tom: Our old bass player Jim named the band after the whole Nixon thing. We were called Splastic Action when we were like 16 so we needed to change that.

Rich: Some girl yelled out the window, 'hey that's cool' so we went with Silent Majority.

Q: How did you start working with Reservoir records in the first place and do you think that you might be doing a full length with them?

Tom: I knew Andrew Orlando and he had seen us a few times live and liked us. We were going to do a split 7" with Clockwise on Motherbox records, but Andrew really wanted to do a full 7" and I like the way his records look and sound, so we went with him.

Q: So what's the first thing that you look for when a label offers you a deal? Do you look at product, distribution, other bands?

Tom: Product for sure. The way it looks.

Q: Who writes the lyrics for Silent Majority and what do you think sets them apart from all the other hardcore/ punk bands around today?

Tom: I write 99.5% of the lyrics. I don't know what sets them apart, but I think that I'm pretty honest. I write about things that happen to me and just the way I feel. I think I can take everyday events and maybe put a little twist on it. Maybe make it stand out a bit.

Q: But they are political, aren't they.

Tom: Yeah, mostly. "New Song" was written about and during the Gulf War. Pretty simplistic, but with a poppy twist, I guess. The pop music hides the ugliness, but the message is still there. It's funny, the lyrics are about bodies and corpses but it won't come across too vile.

Q: Who is the youngest one in the band?

Ben: That would be me.

Q: What would be the most important punk/hc band to affect you and the scene you belong to.

Ben: Probably Fugazi. That led to stuff like Hoover, which is a band that I listen to everyday.

Q: So you think Fugazi is more important than Minor Threat?

Ben: To me at least. Just listening to their recordings influenced my idea of what a good recording should sound like. *Steady Diet* is one of the most amazing sounding records. I totally love it. It made me realize what I want to do with my music.

Q: Silent Majority always gets incredible sounding recordings. What's your secret?

Rich: We go to a really cheap place!! We record really quick and we all eat while recording and that's it.

Tom: We do it live and raw.

Q: Yeah but your records sound anything BUT live and raw

Tom: But they were recorded that way. We used Legend studios in Long Island for the first two 7"s. We were comfortable and the engineer was open minded and let us try out different things.

Rich: We didn't have that much time to record, but the engineer was willing to help in any way he could.

Ryan: Its important to know what you're doing BEFORE you go into the studio. Your sound should be developed already so you don't waste time and money.

Q: Silent Majority (in the Long Island scene) aren't hard enough to be on the *NY Hardest* comp but not poppy enough to be the next Green Day. You're kinda trapped in the middle.

Tom: When we first started, we played chugga chugga songs about beating people up.,etc...

Q: NO, don't tell me that.

Tom: Well I mean it was a joke, you know, about beating up the paper boy or abortion clinics in my room (laughter...) They were funny songs.

Q: At what point did you decided that you were actually good?

Tom: Probably when the ANGLE closed down. At that point we kinda weeded out those in the band who weren't serious (or couldn't play as well).

Q: Why is the Long Island hardcore and punk scene so notoriously huge at this point? People all over talk about LI. When did it get big?

Tom: In 1991 there were like 20 people at the shows. Some of the noteworthy bands were Mind Over Matter, Scapegrace, 1.6 Band too (but on Eastern Long Island.) Lindenhurst, which is our town, had a developing sound. We are officially the oldest band here, but V.O.D. is the biggest drawing band. We are a distant second to them, which is where we got the title of our 2nd 7". I think the scene is great these days. There was a show with Silent Majority, V.O.D. and H2O and 1,200 people showed up, compared to 1991-92, where if you had 30 people you thought you were big shit!!

Rich: Yuppicide use to draw 150 people and that was considered huge!

Q: Do you have a dream label to work with?

Rich: I don't know, I just wanna hang out with Rick Rubin and listen to his Slayer records.

Tom: Probably Revelation, Jade Tree, and any label that would be nice to us. We would stay clear of stuff like Lost and Found. We have to stay clear of people that make us uncomfortable. The full



length will be out on Exit Records, which is done by Wreckage.

Rich: Artie Philly who runs the label with Pavlos is giving us a good deal and we've been friends with him for years. So the record should be out at the end of the summer (96). We asked Andrew from Reservoir first if he would mind, and he was good with it.

Q: How well were your 7's received?

Tom: the first one sold 1,000 and the 2nd one sold 1,500 so far. The first one is being repressed soon.

Q: What's the story behind the bass samples on the "Distant Second" 7"?

Rich: The studio we worked at had done a lot of rap music so we got a bit experimental. We had an 808 digital drum put into a sampler. You hit a key and it shakes the whole room. It fills up the low end in the recording and you can actually see the speakers going in and out.

Tom: My test pressings skip. Most people say their 7" is ok but I don't think we would do it again. Tamborines this time!

Q: Last words:

Tom: Stay positive. Haha. Work 12 hours a day for a living, it makes you appreciate playing shows that much more.

Rich: Stay home.

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by Jim Testa

For some people, playing in a rock band is a hobby. For others, it's a shot at the big-time. But for the members of Hoboken's Cycomotogoat, it's nothing less than a way of life.

In fact, Cycomotogoat is considerably more than just a rock band. It's more of a commune, really, whose members live and work together in an abandoned gas station that's been converted into a combination headquarters, rehearsal space, record label, moving company, and recording studio.

Cycomotogoat's extended family includes lead singer and guitarist Crugie Riccio, bassist David Ares, drummer Tom Costagliola, and keyboardist Rob Clores, along with several roadies and the band's manager, Stroller White. It's not an easy life, and hardly a glamorous one, with everyone involved just barely scraping by. But it's what they all believe in.

At the heart of it all, of course, is the music, but so far, that's been the group's least profitable endeavor. It's not from lack of trying, but it may have something to do with the fact that no one really seems to know what Cycomotogoat means, or what kind of band it is.

"We play in a garage, so I guess maybe we're a garage band," jokes Crugie, who prefers to use only his first name. "Nobody else seems to know what to call us."

The band's music is every bit as unique as its members' lifestyle, a combination of distortion-fueled rock and lush sonic soundscapes, infectious pop riffs and extended jams. "If you have to put some kind of label on it, I'd have to say it's psychedelic rock," says Crugie. "It's got guitars, bass, drums, and keyboards. Some people say we have an American feel, like the Eagles, which I guess could be true to some songs. But to me, it's just rock and roll."

The variety inherent in Cycomotogoat's music hasn't gone unnoticed; this past summer, they scored the unique coup of playing several dates with both the laid-back H.O.R.D.E. festival and the alternative rock-oriented Lollapalooza tour. But, as Crugie notes, they played H.O.R.D.E.'s second stage and appeared in the Chill Out Tent on their Lollapalooza dates.

"Turning our rehearsal space into a studio means that we can have other bands come in and record or mix their projects here at prices they can afford," Crugie notes. "And it also gave us a lot of freedom to record our new album the way we wanted, without worrying about studio bills." But even with the occasional moving job, the recording studio booking steady business, and the band playing out as often as possible, White notes, "Basically, what that means is that we bring in enough money so we can pay the rent, cover the insurance on our truck, and eat spaghetti every night."

The members of Cycomotogoat are hoping that the group's new album, *Braille*, will help improve their fortunes. Produced by John Siket (Sonic Youth, Dave Matthews Band, Helmet) in the group's home studio, the album has recently been released on What Are? Records, best known as the home of the Colorado-based groove band, the Samples.

"We really invested a lot of ourselves in this album, building the studio and trying to have a place where we can create really personal stuff, things that people can listen to for a long time," says Crugie. "When we were recording this album, we all came up with our own sounds; every little intricacy on this album is personal to us, every riff, every blemish. I wish people could listen to it and get it right away, and maybe some people will. But for a lot of people, I think this album will be a little too much for them to handle in a world where everything is done in seconds, spit out, and, like on tv, flashed in front of you in fast frame. It seems like people don't really listen to music with their ears anymore, they listen with their eyes, and it's they're not immediately stimulated, it's almost like the music doesn't matter."

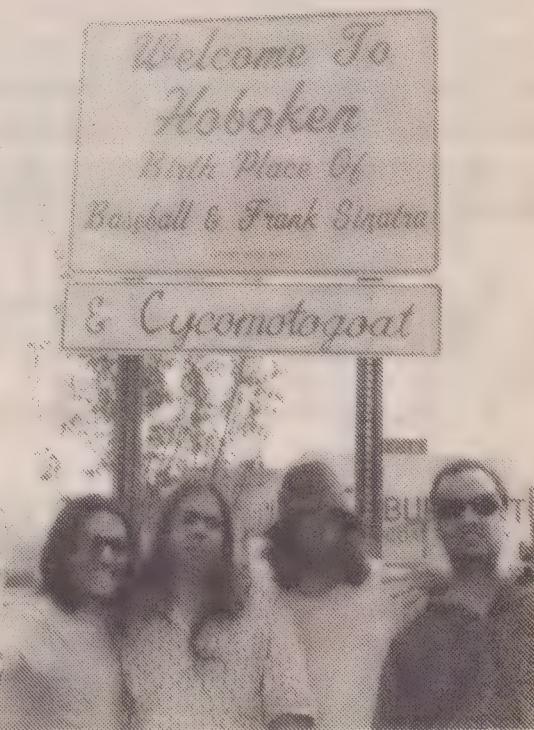
Cycomotogoat's intensely personal approach to crafting music carries over to the live show. The group, which tours constantly, lugs along keyboardist Rob Clores' huge Hammond B-3 organ - the size of a small piano - to insure they'll be able to create just the right sounds. And at every stop, the band creates its own ambience on

stage, setting the mood with romantic candlelight.

"Always going someplace different and being influenced by what was already there got to be really hard for me," explains Crugie. "That's what the candles are for. It's just making ourselves comfortable no matter where we are, sort of at home. Because then I can relax a lot more and just enjoy playing."

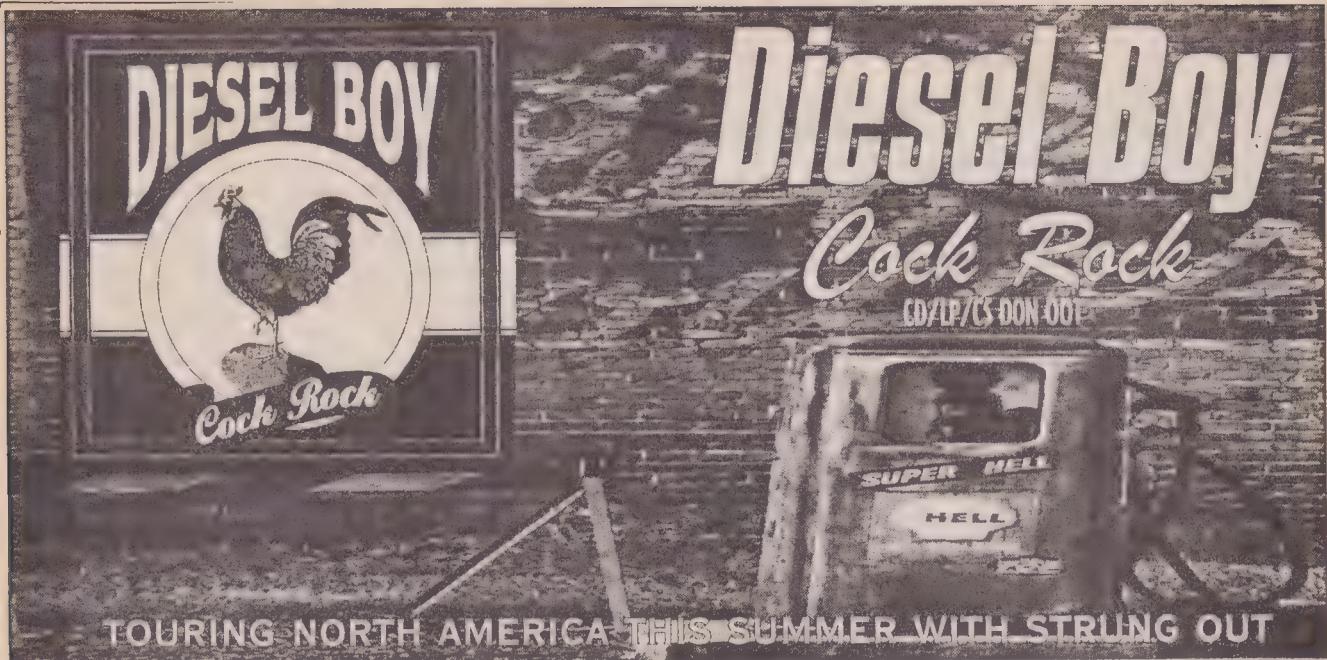
Crugie and Stroller met as children in Princeton, NJ - "we fell out of the same crib when we were born, basically," jokes Stroller - and formed a punk band called The Disturbed in high school. After graduation, they put off college for a year and moved to Providence, Rhode Island, where - in the space of 12 months - they managed to release a 12-inch EP and become one of the city's most popular local bands before breaking up and going their separate ways. Bassist Dave Wilder eventually wound up in California; Stroller drummed in several bands in Philadelphia, including Red Paint People, and later joined the last incarnation of Delaware's Smashing Orange, getting a small taste of life on a major label. "Basically,

# CYCOMOTOGOAT



when I was in Smashing Orange, we didn't do anything and the label didn't do anything for us," he says. "I never want to be in that situation again."

In 1990, Crugie and bassist Dave Ares formed the Bah Gah Brothers, and two years later, renamed themselves Cycomotogoat. That's when they discovered the abandoned gas station on Hoboken's west side and formed the collective. Costagliola, an old friend of Ares, joined when his band, Blind Justice, broke up. Clores was originally brought in by the group's producer, John Siket, to add



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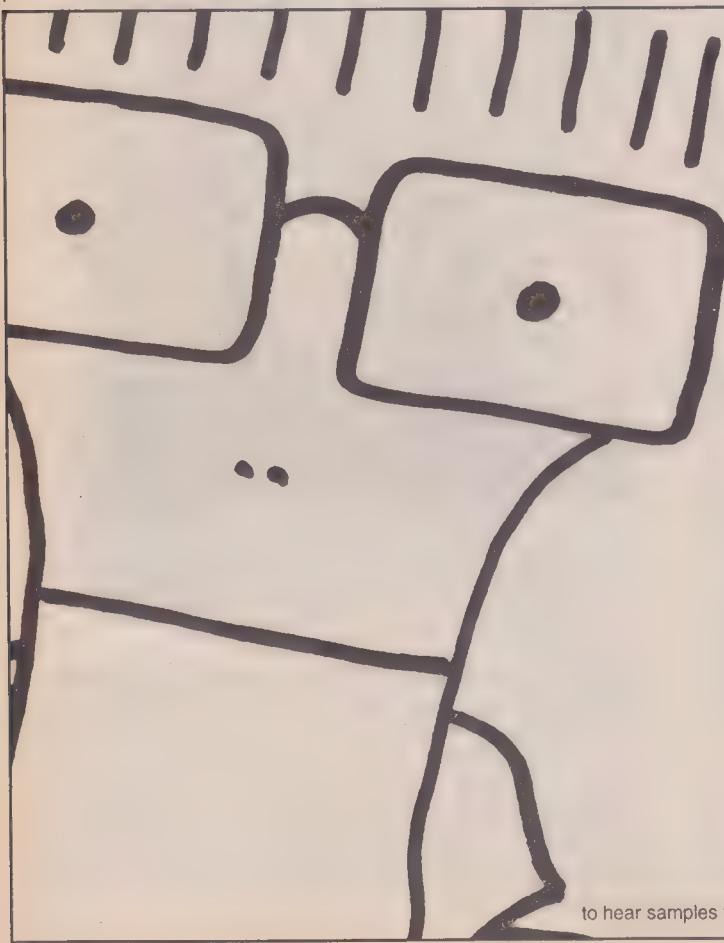


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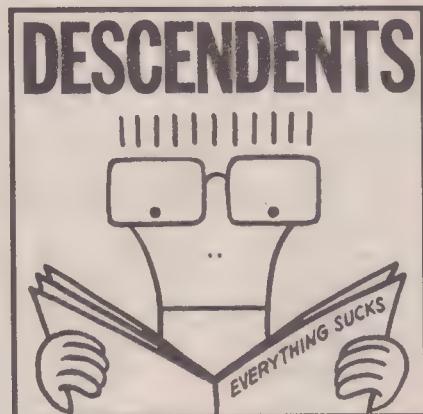
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keyboards to the Braille sessions and ended up becoming a permanent member. After Smashing Orange disbanded, Stroller relocated to Hoboken as well and came aboard as the group's manager.

For the record, I met Crugie and Stroller when they were in The Disturbed and became a huge fan. I even went to Providence to see the band's final show. Also in attendance that weekend was a classmate of Wilder's from Princeton High School named John Popper. Years later, Cycomotogoat would wind up opening several dates for Popper's Blues Traveler and join the H.O.R.D.E. festival three years running.

Crugie, Stroller, and I met for dinner in Hoboken and then went back to their rehearsal space/studio/apartment to talk about the band a little more.

Q: What was it like recording the new album here in your own studio?

Crugie: It was great. We spent eight months recording it. Our recording budget pretty much went for food so we could all eat. That and a couple rolls of recording tape. Otherwise we had everything we needed here. We had some equipment, and John Siket had a lot of equipment and no place to put it, we that all wound up here too. Our last album, *Alkaline*, was a lot heavier, whereas *Braille* is more on the melodic side. But I think that's because of the time we spent. We recorded *Alkaline* in three weeks, total; we wrote the songs, rehearsed them, and recorded them basically live. We didn't have time to do pre-production or anything like that. Whereas on the new album, we could record the songs and play them back, and then think if we should slow the tempo or change the guitar sound, or whatever. So I think there's a lot more subtlety and certainly a lot more variety on the new album.

Q: It's kind of funny that you have this amazing rock 'n' roll co-op going here in Hoboken, which most people think of as a music-oriented town, but you almost never play shows here.

Crugie: Hoboken is pretty beat for live music right now. There's Maxwell's, of course, but they only seem interested in booking national acts. They're not really into creating any kind of local scene.

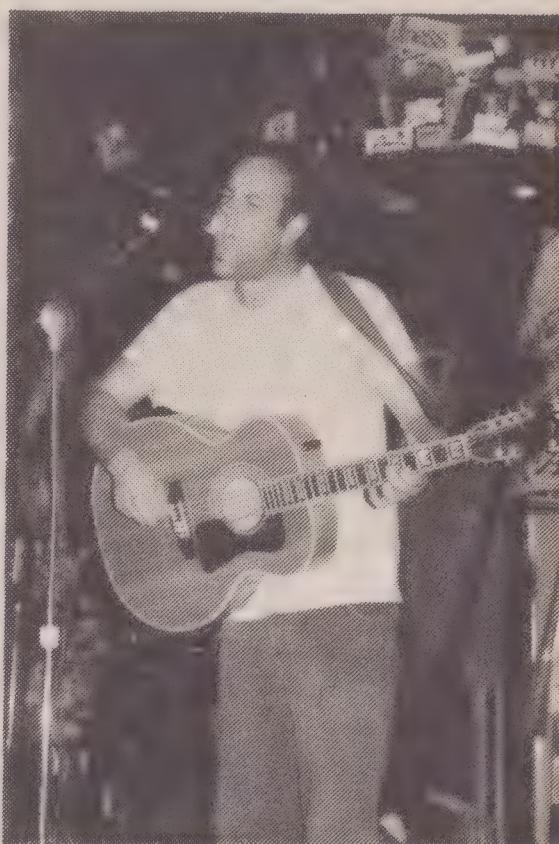
Q: Your operation here reminds me an awful lot of the Mutiny Zoo (run by another Hoboken band, Illness.) You guys even run a little moving company like they do.

Stroller: Well, when you have a band, you usually have a van. We have a truck. So what do you do with a truck to make money? You do little moving jobs. It's a way for us to make some extra money and keep everything going. The Illness guys are great and we've done a lot of stuff with them. I guess you could say we have a lot in common with them.

Q: As far as shows, you guys had this sort of residency thing going at McGovern's over in New York for a while, right?

Crugie: We played McGovern's every Thursday night for about a year. We just stopped this past June and July. Originally, we wanted to play with the same bands every week. That way, everybody got to know each other and people knew what to expect. We wanted to establish a certain vibe, so the night would start with a certain groove and end with a certain groove. But the guy who owns and runs the club had different ideas. He wants to make money. So right when we had things going just the way we wanted them, and things were going really well, we had to change to go in his direction. And the vibe was just destroyed. Then the whole thing just fell apart.

Q: I think one problem you guys have is the name.



Nobody knows what it means.

Crugie: Well, we changed the name because I didn't like the Bah Gah Brothers. And I really don't like the name Cycomotogoat all that much.

Stroller: The name really doesn't mean anything, but it's like, Cyco - for psychedelic, and Moto - for motor, because we live in a gas station, and we called our label De\*eS\*el (pronounced: "diesel") Records. And Goat is just, you know, a goat.

Q: The thing that gets me about doing this interview is that I met you about 11 years ago, when you were just kids, and it seems to me like you've always wanted to be doing this. I don't think you've ever wanted to be anything but a musician.

Crugie: If you had asked me ten years ago what I'd be doing today, I never could have guessed that I'd be where I am. I've never been a person who makes an agenda and knows exactly what they want to be doing in a certain period of time. I know that I always want to be doing something musically, but I couldn't tell you what kind of songs are going to be coming out of me next. I thought that's how it always went. I thought kids always wanted to grow up to be a rock star. I want to be a musician, not a rock star. I never wanted to be a rock star. I never dreamed about being this super famous person. I just wanted people to like my songs. And if everyone likes your songs, they're going to somewhat like you. So you'll have some sort of notoriety. But the hardest thing is getting people to hear your stuff, and I don't think we've really had a chance yet for a mass of people to hear us.

Q: You really haven't had it easy, considering how hard you've worked and how long you've been doing this. Have you ever given any thought to why things have gone so slowly?

Crugie: I think today there's just an oversaturation of bands. People are apathetic because there's a rock band on every corner and the majority of them just don't mean a thing. We really spent a lot of time doing what we're doing, building the studio and trying to have a place where we can create really personal stuff, things that people can listen to for a long time. When we were recording the album, we came up with our own sounds; every little intricacy on that album is really personal to us. Every little blemish is a part of us. That's why this album is really special to me. And I think that people listening to it will get a lot more out of it listening to it over and over. I wish people could listen to it and get it right away, and maybe some

people will. But for a lot of people, the album is a little too much for them to handle in a world where everything is done in seconds, spit out and done fast-frame. People don't really listen to music with their ears anymore, they listen to it with their eyes. And if they're not stimulated that way, it's almost like the music doesn't matter.

Q: It's amazing to me that you started out (in the Disturbed) playing two-minute punk songs and now you're creating these 20-minute soundscapes.

Crugie: I guess that's just the process of maturing. That's all I could do then was play three or four chords. I guess it's just a different feeling. The thing I like about the Disturbed stuff is that it was pretty heartfelt. That's what we were doing. It's not like punk rock was in back then, and it was just the cool thing to do to be in a punk band. If we had been the Disturbed now, we would have been a commercial success, but back then, that's just who we were, we were just young kids and we were into that stuff. And that was the limit of my ability when it came to guitar playing. And also back then I was pretty close-minded about music. I was really into the Sex Pistols and the Clash, which I'm still into today, but now there's lots of other horizons that I'm into. I just think music is really cool. I don't know what songs are going to come out of this band next, that's what I like about it. It always feels like there's an infinite variety of what we could do, it could be something mellow or even something jazzy. One song that didn't make it onto the album is this 20 minute long piece that sounds like something from (Miles Davis') *Bitches Brew*. Like some crazy acid jazz from the Seventies. Or then we'll do some poppy rock song, or a bluesy sounding song. To me, that's cool, I'm glad that's where we're at. I hope we don't get stuck in some kind of niche where we feel like we have to satisfy someone. Maybe it's because we haven't satisfied anybody yet that we're still out for ourselves. Some people will say, that's not right, you're not playing for the people. But there has to be room for people who into a whole variety of listening to music and sounds and dreaming. I like to dream. I like to go to sleep and dream, and I like to dream when I listen to music. I like to be taken somewhere else.



Crugie behind the board at Dee\*Sel Studios



by Jim Testa

How long would you wait for your ship to come in?

Frank Phobia, the driving force behind Reading, PA crunch-rockers Anthrophobia, has been at it since 1985, and believe me, in those 11 years he's seen it all - personnel changes, catastrophic tours, DIY 7 inches, demo tapes, self-released CD's, a nearly ruinous production deal, side projects and playing in other bands, opening slots for some of the biggest names in rock. You name it, he's been there, done that, lived it, booked it, heard it, written about it.... like he says in one of Anthrophobia's new songs, he's been there for "the whole nine yards."

But things are finally starting to look up. The band's current lineup has gelled and been stable for a while now - Mike and Hans Phobia on guitars, Mike the seasoned old pro, Hans the feisty punk kid with the tattoos bouncing all over the stage. Frank on vocals, as always, Todd Phobia providing a solid bottom on bass, and most recent addition, Joe Phobia on drums. And the band has finally gotten a real live record deal - signed to New York's Mausoleum Records, who have already re-released the band's 1995 EP "Framework" and will soon be releasing a new full-length album.

No one - least of all the label, and certainly not the band - was ready for what happened when Mausoleum started servicing the re-mixed EP to college radio. College deejays ate it up, and it quickly became one of the most added new discs at stations all over the country. That helped energize the label and made them realize there was some real potential with the band. Everyone involved has been scrambling to catch up since. Anthrophobia may be on its 16th drummer and into its 11th year, but all of a sudden, it's a whole new ballgame.

The Mausoleum deal couldn't have come at a better time. Last year, the band was rocked when Frank lost one of his closest friends - as well as his personal mentor - when Carol Schutzbach passed away. Carol was the earth mother of the Philadelphia indie-rock scene, as well as a co-editor of B Side magazine, and adopted Anthrophobia as a pet project years ago.

Frank and I met in 1990, when Anthrophobia visited ABC No Rio for the first time and I immediately became a huge fan of the band. Over the years, we've become close friends - he's written reviews for Jersey Beat, I've helped him survive the ups and downs of his band, and we've shared more than few hotel rooms at events like SXSW and the Philadelphia Music Conference.

Frank and I recently got together to talk about what's happening now with Anthrophobia... and how Frank managed to survive this far



without giving up or burning out.

Q: It kind of sounds like you've been doing but suffering for the past ten years that you've been trying to get this band going, but really, there have been a lot of high points along the way.

Frank: Oh yeah. Every time it hit rock bottom, [ ] there was one good thing that kept me keep doing it. There was only one point where I actually broke up the band. That's when I was playing in Monkey Fear, and Monkey Fear was more in the genre of techno-industrial, and I got to play guitar and not have to sing. We had some good shows too - we opened for Nine Inch Nails and Surgery. It was kind of nice not to be the focus of attention for a while. It was a nice little break. But I was pretty miserable and I got Anthrophobia back together pretty quick.

Q: The list of bands that Anthrophobia has opened for over the years reads like a Who's Who of Eighties and Nineties rock.

Frank: It might read like a Who's Who of Rock, but you have to remember... Take a band like Jawbox. The first time we played with them, it was in front of 20 people and Kim had purple hair, and they were still just a trio. And then the next time we played with them a few years later, it was a Rock For Choice show that I booked and there were 600 kids there. But now we're too metal to play with Jawbox, I guess.

Q: And Faith No More.

Frank: When we played with them, it was before Mike Patton was in the band and Chuck Mosely was still singing. So we're going way back there. Then later I booked a show for Faith No More and I became friends with Mike Patton. So yeah, I've met a lot of bands, but I don't consider most of them friends. I got to play with a lot of them because I booked the shows. I was at a point where I got out of college and I really wanted to do the band, and the only way to get the band going to the next level was to play bigger shows. And the easiest way to do that was to just book ourselves with bigger bands. And in a secondary market like Reading, it was a lot easier than trying to become a club promoter in New York or Philly. So I started booking shows at some of the bigger clubs in the area.

Q: You've really done a little bit of everything. You've been a writer, you've booked shows, you're doing TV now.

Frank: Yeah, "Flip Your Wig." It's a cable access show in Reading. We've done six shows in a year, so it averages out to bi-monthly. It's fun. I mean, I have a college degree in film and animation and I don't use it, so it's just nice to be around cameras and editing equipment. At least I feel like I'm doing something with my diploma. And I write for Jersey Beat, and I used to write for B Side. I got started writing because of Carol. I think I became involved with other aspects of the music industry after college largely because of Carol. She had a big influence. She would say, it helps the visibility of the band if you stay more active. So book shows. Carol used to book shows, so she taught me how to do a budget to get a big band. Without her, I never would have known how to do a show proposal. Then B Side was her magazine, and she got me to do 7 inch reviews

for her. Just down the line, she got me involved in a lot of different aspects. And now she's not here. So I really don't know who to ask a lot of the silly questions, that I used to ask her. And she used to say, "Frank, Frank, Frank..." Her death, I mean, it still hasn't really sunken in.

Q: Have you gotten to the point where younger kids come up to you and ask those silly questions?

Frank: Oh my God, yeah. (laughs) Actually, this last stint of booking a club I did, I was working with a club owner who was really a restaurant owner, who knew jazz and blues, and was basically losing his ass trying run a rock club. So I had to teach him a lot of what we were doing.

Q: I think having known a person like Carol really changes your life. It makes you feel like you then have a responsibility to pass on some of what you've learned, just like she used to do.

Frank: Carol maybe never spelled it out quite like that, but sure. Since then, I've shown people how to do show proposals and that kind of thing. And I've produced a couple of bands. That's something I like, because so many young bands are taken advantage of in so many ways. As I was, signing a bad production deal. I basically lost two and a half years of my so-called career by signing a bad deal. So I try to steer kids away from that. I met this 14-year old girl who's really talented, and she did the same thing, she had signed this production deal with a guy who wasn't helping her. So I set her up with our lawyer and he helped her get out of the deal. And I may be producing her next demo, and I've gotten her some shows. So yeah, things like that, you try to help where you can. [ ] I think that's one of the things that's kept me going. It's rejuvenating finding new energy in something new. Now I've got a couple of younger bands that I'm trying to help. And if I see someone that I think has some talent and they're getting totally screwed, I've kind of gone out of my way to try and get them back on track. Sometimes it gets like, 'yeah, Old Man Phobia is here to help.' Because I'm 29, but sometimes I feel much, much older. But at least it's in wisdom, not in the aches and pains of real old age.

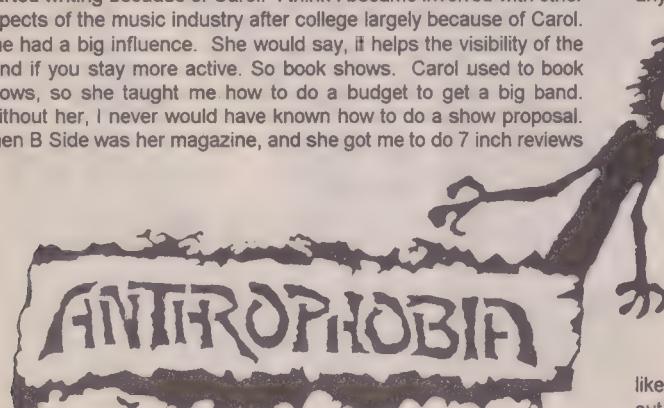
Q: Can you feel yourself getting older?

Frank: Just in the waistline, which keeps getting bigger. And in my throat sometimes. Especially now, working this record, because I'm on the phone all day trying to work it. I'm still doing what I did when we weren't signed; only more so, but now I have a few more people trying to help. But still, if I didn't do it, I wouldn't get done, because no one cares about you more than yourself. It's really funny to hear the misconceptions that some people have about what it's like being signed. Especially around Reading, because it's such a small town. I ran into this guy in another band and he asked me if we had one any touring, and I said, well, we went to Maine and we went to

Boston, just scattered shows here and there. And he was like, 'Well, who drove you? Or did you fly?' I mean, no concept. I just smiled and said, "we drove ourselves." He thought we had our own sound man and roadies. It's nuts.

I love when I talk to some of these little punk kids who just discovered the Queers last month and think Punk is something new, and then they see something like "Another State Of Mind" and find out about Social Distortion and Minor Threat, and they can't believe all that stuff happened back then.

Q: The funny thing about "Another State Of Mind" is that back in 1980 or whenever it was when those bands did what was really the first national tour by punk bands, they were like pioneers. Things have changed so much, and yet when kids go out on tour today, they still run into all the same stuff. The van breaks down, shows get canceled, everybody eats spaghetti because it's all you can afford...



Frank: Yeah, all that stuff still happens but it's all glossed over now, because there have been these punks bands that have sold millions of records. So kids today think it's like that for everybody. To me, I don't care what anybody's playing, as long as it's honest. We've been through this whole thing where "you're not punk enough" or "you're not hardcore enough" for this kind of show, or our radio station, or whatever. And to me, it's like, "Kid, I'm more punk than you're ever gonna be." But it all comes down to whatever little niche people put you into. You hear these bands and they're like, "Oh yeah, we sound just like Bad Religion" or "we sound just like Stone Temple Pilots," or whatever. I'd rather shoot myself. I'd rather do anything than do that. And the fact that it took 11 years for someone to say, all right, I'm going to attempt to market what you do, because you don't fit into any specific market... well, more power to them. I'll help them any way I can, but basically, now it's their headache to try and sell us.

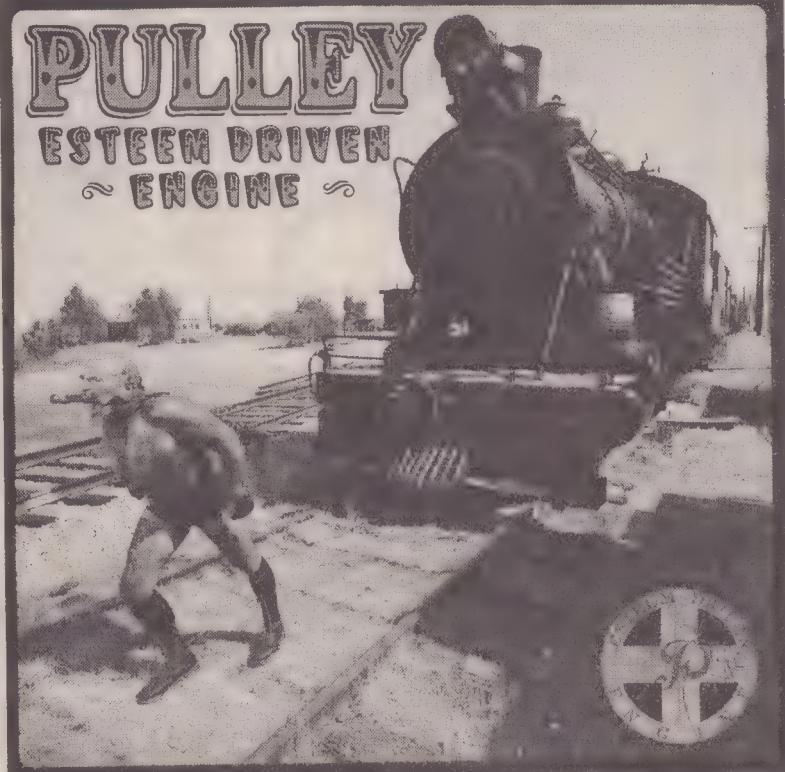
Q: Have you been able to figure out why college radio went nuts for this record?

Frank: I have no idea. This record that's out now, this EP that's supposed to be paving the way for the full-length, I was kind of against putting it out again. Our drummer that recorded it had left the band and I think that Joe (the current drummer) is much more appropriate, he's become the aggressive backbone of the band. But Mausoleum wanted us to re-release the EP, and they wanted us to re-mix it with this guy [Gary Lyons] who had worked with Bruce Springsteen and Aerosmith. And I was thinking, Jesus, maybe I was wrong, maybe this label doesn't know what we're about. But whatever, if it makes them that much happier to remix the record, then fine. And Gary Lyons was great. You'd think that a guy who had worked with Aerosmith and Springsteen and the Rolling Stones and Foreigner would have some kind of attitude, but he had none. He was very willing to cater to whatever we wanted the record to sound like. And I do think the new mix is better, but then the mastering

ruined the whole thing anyway. That's an issue of quality control, and that's something that I did learn doing this EP. I had maybe a misconception that with Mausoleum in charge, I could sit back and maybe only check in every other day instead of four times a day and everything would be okay. Well, I found out the hard way. So now I'm still setting up shows, I'm still setting up in-stores for us to do, I did all these interviews for radio, I was at the mix. I'm still very much involved with every day-to-day event. Bottom line, I can't play a show without these guys, and to be honest, for a couple of years I had started sitting back in the songwriting. I've always written all the lyrics but for a while there, I was letting the guitar players pretty much write the music. There was a point where I just threw up my hands. Like when we did the 7 inch with Suzi Gardner from L7 singing with me. The thing is, I'm just really happy with that record and the thing I liked best about it wasn't that we had someone from L7 on our record, but that Suzi and my voice just worked really well together. But then right after that to have half the band quit on me because they all started expecting deli trays at every show, I mean it just got a little hard to take.

But now with this record, I'm back in the writing process again and I'm really enjoying it. And I have to say that 90% of all the ex-members of this band are still my friends, and most of them have come back to me, if only to say they were wrong to think it would get any easier if they left and tried to do it themselves. Some of them left with this attitude that "there's a reason we're not signed yet and it's gotta be Frank," and they've gone and every single one of them has come back to me and asked for advice or help with something. And usually I've given it to them.

I'm really not bitter. Even though it's taken so long and so many bad things have happened, I'm really not. I'm just kinda taking it as it comes. There may have been a couple of years when the lyrics weren't quite as pissed off. Well, I'm more pissed off now than ever, if you listen to the songs, but now I can put it in perspective, because I do have things to be thankful for. Things that would have never happened, things I would have never done if I hadn't been in this band for all these years.



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# KILLER KOWALSKI

By Jim Testa

Lindsey Anderson - vocals

Paul Richard - guitar

Jack Steeples - bass

Greg Farah - drums

Lindsey Anderson is quite a woman. Five foot nine and all of it legs - sexy, sassy, and - maybe most importantly - a survivor. She's been around the punk scene for longer than most of the pimply little cretins who ogle her from the moshpit have been on the planet.

Killer Kowalski, the peppy power-pop punk band Anderson fronts, carries some impressive credentials as well. Guitarist Paul Richards and bassist Jack Steeples were founding members of Adrenalin O.D., arguably New Jersey's first important hardcore band, and one of the most influential rock and roll acts ever spawned by the Garden State.

Killer Kowalski plays loud and fast rock 'n' roll, although the music is a lot catchier and not nearly as angry, heavy, or hard as AOD, or Anderson's old Connecticut HC band, the Vatican Commandos. "Hey, I like not having to be angry all the time anymore," chortles Paul. "And I really like playing for audiences that aren't trying to knock my teeth out with the mike stand every show," adds Jack.

We talked to the band in about the punkest place we could think of, one of the ramshackle dressing rooms at CBGB after a recent Saturday night set.

Q: Paul, let's go back to the beginning. When did Adrenalin OD break up?

Paul: AOD broke up in, let's see, August, 1990, something like that. It was right after *Ishtar* came out and was the dismal flop we thought it would be. And by that point, we just hated each other and split.

Q: At that point, after having been in AOD for about ten years, did you have any intention of ever playing in another band?

Paul: Oh yeah. Every other August after that I was in a new band. The way Killer Kowalski happened for me, I was in a band that I didn't really like and I saw an ad in the Village Voice for a bass player. And it said, "Into X, the Rezillo, and the Muffs," and I said to myself, "wow, that sounds really good, too bad they don't want a guitarist." And the more I thought about it, I still had Jack's bass in my basement, so I asked him if I could use it for a while, and he said yeah. So the band turned out to be Killer Kowalski, and I played bass for a while.

Lindsey: That was really funny, because I put the ad in the Voice and usually, I screened all the messages and was really careful who we let audition. But it just happened that Paul was the only one I didn't screen or talk to. And about five minutes before Paul was going to show up to try out, I finally played the voice-mail and I heard his voice saying, "I used to play in AOD," and I was like, "oh my god!" Because I knew them from when I used to live in Connecticut and played with the Vatican Commandos. And of course, I just loved AOD. I mean, everybody did.



Q: How far along was Killer Kowalski as a band when Paul showed up? Were you still just putting the band together?

Lindsey: I had been playing in Starkist, this all-girl garage-punk joke band. People would come out to see us just because we were girls and wore shorts on stage, but we couldn't really play. So then two of those girls quit, and we got a new drummer and bass player. And then players just kept falling off. The bass player quit and that's when we got Paul. That was right after we changed the name to Killer Kowalski. Then the drummer quit and that's when we got Greg. So it started to come together. Then when we lost the other guitar player, I begged Paul to switch to guitar, and that's when he got Jack to play bass. That was like last November. And it was so funny because this was like a week before we were going to open for Iggy, it was our biggest show ever.

Paul: I think we rehearsed with Jack once and played the show.

Jack: Yeah, we rehearsed once, that was it. And we had two shows.

Q: Were you looking to get back into a band when Paul called?

Jack: No, I was kinda retired.

Q: You did that once with AOD, when you got married and had a kid, right? That's when they got Keith Hartel on bass.

Jack: Yeah, I quit, then I came back, then I quit again because those guys were a bunch of assholes. (laughs) Then I played guitar in a band for a while, then I stopped that. And about a year after that, Paul called me, and I said, well, if you need a bass player, I'll play.

Lindsey: Jack couldn't believe that we were nice. He was like, "Oh my god, this band is like *nice*. And you guys don't fight." And when I went on vacation, I brought the band back little presents and they were all so freaked out. They couldn't believe it. But I just wanna say how great it was to get Greg in the band too. He had come to a bunch of our shows before he joined, and he was like the only one who understood pop drumming. He doesn't overplay and he's not into the metal double-kick drum thing. Greg was amazing. You should get his perspective.

Greg: It was actually pretty scary when I joined. A lot of the rehearsals were only Lindsey and this girl Annie, back when Lindsey still played guitar. And then Annie hurt her arm and she couldn't play, so she would just show up and sing along, and we were rehearsing with just drums and guitar. It was some tough two hours to show up for those rehearsals.

Q: Not only is this band nice, but your audiences are much nicer too. I remember the last time I tried to take photos of Paul in this place, it was one of those Sunday hardcore matinees and I almost got myself killed. What's it like leaving all that pandemonium behind you and playing for this nice friendly garage-rock crowds now?

Paul: You mean instead of for a bunch a kids trying to kill each other? I don't miss it. I don't miss the fat lips from people kicking the microphone in your face, and I don't miss jumping on stage and kicking the guitar chords out. Knocking over the drum set. I don't miss that at all.

Jack: I liked it. I liked all that. (laughs)

Q: Have you noticed any real differences between being in a band now and what it was like ten years ago?

Paul: (thinks a minute) No, it's still the same old bullshit. You still gotta carry your own equipment, still have to play rotten shows in the middle of the week, God knows where.

Lindsey: Hey, but I took care of that. I'm the one that put an end to middle of the week shows. No more shows now unless it's a weekend on a great bill. Of course we play less because less people will have us under those terms.

Q: I only saw two other old AOD fans in the crowd tonight. It looks like you really don't get the old fans coming out to see you much.

Paul: It's something I never bring up. That's history now. I have a new band to worry about.

Q: How about career-wise? Do you want to try and do this full-time? Or have you made peace with the fact that you're never going to make a lot of money playing music?



Paul: Well, it was never my intention to make a lot of money doing this. I never wanted to sign to a major label. I just love playing so I just keep doing it. What happens, happens. We got a record out now. People seem to like it. People like us. (He shrugs) It's fun.

Lindsey: We were all set to put this single out by ourselves, when we got a call from Blackout! asking if they could do it. So we were really excited. I've been mailing out like 20 tapes a week and this all shit, and we've already gotten a lot of good press. Whenever we get another clip in the mail, I want to cover up my eyes because I think they're going to say really mean things about us, but so far they've been really nice. And since the single came out, things have been really positive. And if the single does well, Blackout! said they'd do a CD. So now it's just wait and see.

Q: Greg, did you have any idea who Jack and Paul were? Were you ever an AOD fan?

Greg: No, I had no idea. Paul was just another nobody playing bass when he showed up. I'd never figure him for a rock star. But it's great being with them, because they've done it all... been there, done everything. There's nothing new for them, so it makes it easier to be in a band with them.... It's much better that Paul's playing guitar

now, though, because Jack has much better bass lines than Paul ever did. (laughs)

(A week before Halloween, Adrenalin O.D. reunited for two shows at Maxwell's and Coney Island High. The reunion marked the first time that Paul, Jack, guitarist Bruce Wingate, and drummer Dave Scott had played together in six years.)

Q: Paul, how did this AOD reunion thing happen?

Paul: Well, a bunch of us were talking and someone brought up the fact that it was going to be our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary since getting together. So there was a little talk about maybe getting together to do something but nobody took it very seriously. Then Anthony Trance (local show promoter) heard about it and told us he'd pay us \$1500 to get back together for a show. So as soon as we heard that, we were like, "When do you want us to play?"

Q: Do you think this could lead to something permanent?

Paul: Nah. Dave's in Florida, Bruce is up in Connecticut, everybody's into their own thing. Besides, we get along a lot better if we only have to see each other every couple of years.

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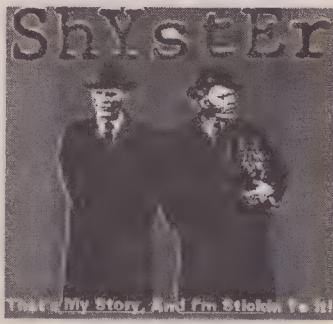
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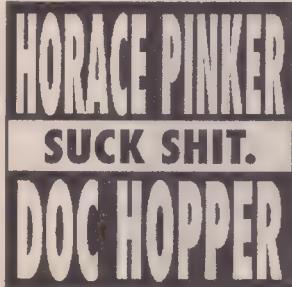
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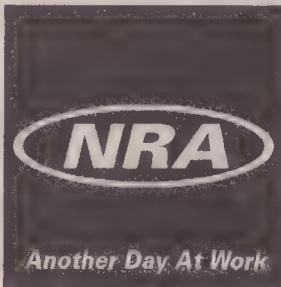
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*Railroad Earth is one of Wilmington, North Carolina's best young bands, four guys with a driving guitar sound and forceful melodies. We talked to them about the up-and-coming Wilmington scene, their thoughts on being in a band, and where they'd like their music to take them.* Interview and photos by Jim Testa.

**Kevin Powell, lead vocals and guitar**

**Mike D'Alessandro - bass, vocals**

**Rick Moras - drums, vocals**

**Alex Alexander - guitar, vocals**

Kevin: The band got together when I first got back from school, when I moved here from Fayetteville, which is where Mike and I are from. I was in another band here that was totally terrible, they were a hippie band and they were awful. And I wanted to play something that really kicked, but I was a drummer at the time and I was just starting to learn guitar, and just starting to get the balls to sing. Mike was someone I knew from junior high and high school, so we'd get together and jam a little. It was us and this guy Joel, who's in Raymond Brake now. Mike was going to State then, but he wanted to quit school anyway, so I talked him into moving here (Wilmington) and that's how the band started. Then Alex, the other guitar player, came along, and he's been in the band the longest after me and Mike. We went through a bunch of different drummers. Then Rick came into the band about two years ago. So although Railroad Earth has actually been around for four years or so, we really only feel like we've been getting anywhere for the last two years. Those first two years were just a lot of false starts and learning from our mistakes.

Q: Rick, you were a metalhead?

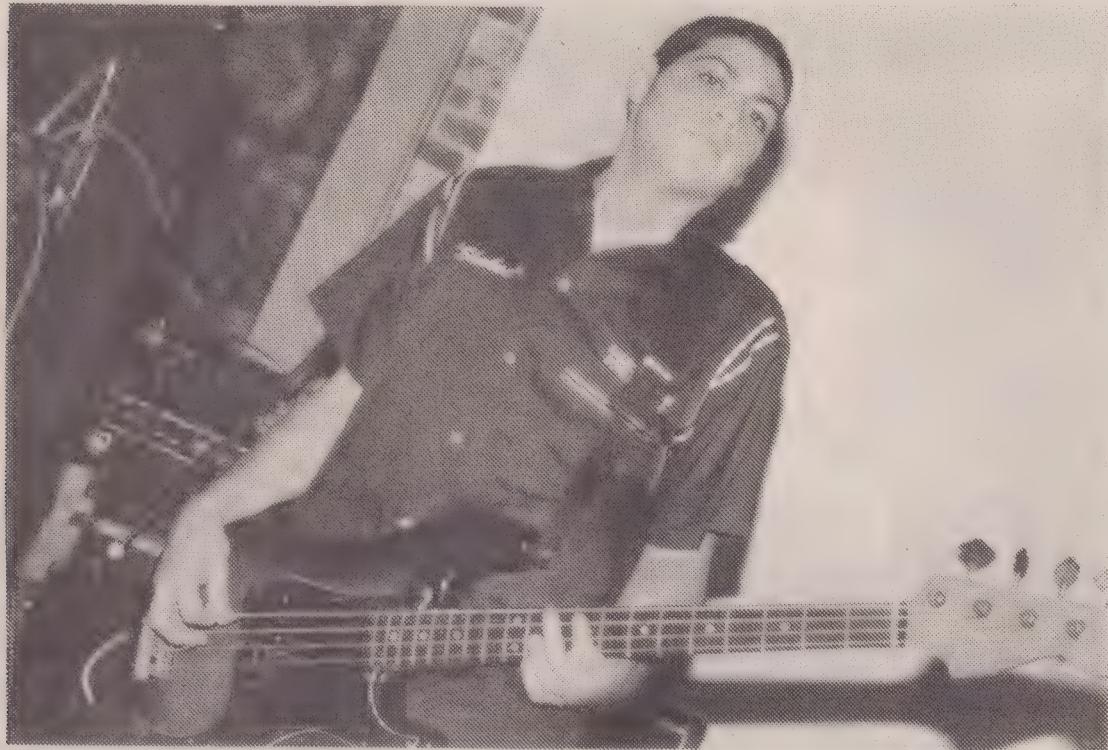
Rick: Yeah, totally. Pearl Jam and Pantera. I've changed quite a bit. But even two years ago, I wasn't just a metalhead anymore. I was starting to see both sides of the fence, if you know what I mean.

Kevin: Getting Rick really got us on the right track. We seriously struggled for those first two years, trying to find a drummer and trying to get any kind of decent gig. And we're still struggling with getting shows, which is kind of funny. But at least I feel now that we've come a long way. We've developed a sound, we've gotten better on our instruments, and we've become very serious about the band. But we still can't seem to get good shows without killing ourselves. Boy, that's going to be my theme for this interview, isn't it? How bitter I am.

[Everybody laughs]

Q: Here I've been raving about what a great scene you've got here in Wilmington and you're complaining. But I guess no place is perfect when you have to live there. There are always snakes in the Garden of Eden.

Kevin: Well, don't get me wrong, I do think this is the Garden of Eden. There's definitely a scene here, but it's an eclectic scene. We don't have a sound here. We haven't been labeled, which is to our benefit, because we don't have label people crawling all over the place. And you don't get those bastards in the media running around going, 'What kind of sound do you have in Wilmington?' There's some real musical experimentation going on around here, which everyone in the scene can attest to.



# RailRoad Earth

Q: I was amazed the first time I walked up and down Front St. (Wilmington's main drag) and saw how many clubs there are here, and then how many bands there are here. But it's not that big a town. Is there enough audience here to go around?

Kevin: Yes and no.

Mike: It depends on who you are, really.

Rick: Who you are, and what the club is, too. Certain people go to certain clubs. It can be really cliquey here.

Mike: Which we do too. We don't go to every club.

Rick: That may be a bad thing, but that's just the way it is. And if you play a Tuesday or Wednesday night, it just about guarantees that hardly anyone's going to be there. You may get some of your fans to come, if you spread the word, but people just won't walk in off the street because there's a show going on those nights.

Q: That's hardly unique to Wilmington. That's true in New York City too.

Kevin: Yeah, but it is a problem. There is a scene here, but nobody knows about it. Why? Two reasons. One, we have no radio station where people can hear local bands. There's one radio station in town, and they will play a local band's record if they like you. And they have a local band show, but it's buried in the schedule so no one can hear it. And the second reason is that we have no magazine in this town, no kind of press, that will interview bands and review local music. Nobody's interested, either at the local media or at the radio stations. It's basically word of mouth, and it seems like it shouldn't be that way.

Q: Let's try another question: What's good about Wilmington?

Mike: It's got a good, young crowd.

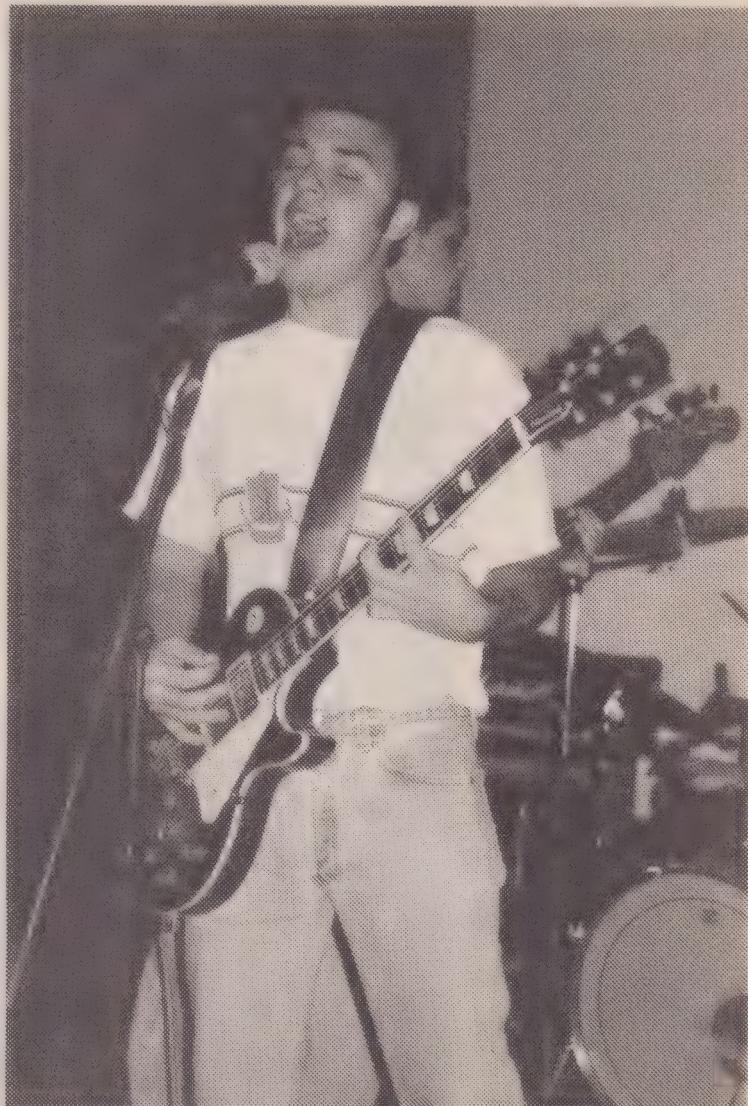
Kevin: There's a good bunch of people here. There are people here who care about music. People like Lee Buffaloe, and the other people at Opulence Records, people who work really hard to support local music and get people out to see local bands. They're not in love with the glamour, or because they want to break into the industry, they just love music. And that's something you don't find every day. And you find people that come to shows because they love music. Not everyone here is like that, but the people who are adamant about music, you know who they are. They don't sit in their rooms and talk about how everything sucks, they come out and support bands. So we don't have a huge group of supporters, but the people who do come out are adamant, they yell and scream when they come to shows, and they buy your records when you put them out. So people do care. Not everyone's jaded around here. And the bands really support each other.

Mike: Another thing you find a lot here is that one guy will play with four or five bands, and another guy will play with four or five other bands, and all those bands usually wind up hanging out together and

making a little clique. You see that a lot here.

Rick: There don't seem to be a lot of other bands around here that sound like us, either. There are a lot of hard punk bands and metal bands, but not so many melodic bands, or whatever you want to call us.

Kevin: The way I look at it is this: Bands that work, bands that are serious, support each other. There's four or five bands I could name and most of them are involved with Opulence, one way or another.



**Kevin Powell**

And that's not a coincidence, there's a reason for that. Those bands care. And if you listen to the Opulence sampler, you hear a very eclectic group of bands. That's the 'Wilmington sound.' We don't have one, that's what our sound is. Now the bands that hang together and only support one kind of music, who are those people? Are you going to hear about them? No, you're not. It's the bands that support each other that help each other get ahead. And they're very different. Tricky The Cosmonaut doesn't sound anything like Railroad Earth. Or Emily's Porch, or Inkpot Monkey. Very different sounds. But we still support each other, come to each other's shows. And those other people who are working to form cliques?

That's all they're ever going to have - cliques.

Rick: That's true.

Q: Okay, I'm not going to ask you to describe your sound, but I'll ask an even harder question. There are five bands playing out in Wilmington tonight, and you're one of them. Why should I go see Railroad Earth instead of one of those other bands?

Rick: 'Cause we're better than all those other bands.

(Laughter)

Rick and Mike: Don't print that!

(Lots of confused chatter)

Kevin: Because we're *not* on the HORDE tour. That's the number one reason to come see us.

Q: Actually, I think Rick had the right answer. If you don't believe you're the best band in town, you shouldn't be standing on stage.

Rick: Oh, I do believe it, that we're the best band in town.

Kevin: But that's not a popular attitude. That's a very *unpopular* attitude.

Q: Well, you might not want to say it out loud, but you should think that way.

Kevin: You always think about that, you think, 'Are we better than these guys?' But it's such a subjective thing. All I know is that we kick ass. I know it. I don't think it, I don't *feel* that's the right answer, I know it with every fiber of my being. And I think all of us exude that if you see us on stage.

Q: Okay, here's another philosophical question. You make records, you go on stage and people pay to see you. Does that make you an entertainer? Is that what your job is, to entertain people?

Mike: Entertainment? I don't know. I've always thought of rap acts as entertainment. They come out, they put on a show, they wear costumes, and they're not musicians.

Rick: Yeah, but that's not what he's asking. The definition of entertain isn't to dress up. Entertain is to interest someone, to give something to the people.

Mike: I think we entertain, but I don't think we're entertainers.

Rick: I would say that yes, we are there in a certain respect to entertain people.

Kevin: I think that's a very fine line. I think we are entertainers; some people come because they like seeing a bunch of people on stage who are very serious about what they do... My opinion is, do you have something to say? That's what I'm entertained by. I like people who are intense and serious, but at the same time, can enjoy themselves. That's entertaining to me.

Q: Let me ask this another way. When you're making up a set list and planning a show, are you more concerned about whether the audience is happy with it, or whether you're happy with it?

Mike: I think we worry first about whether we're happy with it.

Rick: I think it's a two-step process. First you worry whether you're happy with it, and then when you're happy with what you're doing, you hope the audience will accept that and enjoy it.

Kevin: But what goes into all those decisions is how you perceive people are going to react to it. Like, is it going to be really low at this point in the set, or is it going to be a consistently rocking set, or is it going to build at one point.

Rick: Yeah, that's true. You are concerned about what their reaction will be.

Kevin: And that in a sense is staging. Choreography, in a sense.

Q: Part of entertainment.

Kevin: Part of entertainment. Exactly. But we are enjoying it just as much as other people are enjoying it. Otherwise we wouldn't do it. It's not like we walk up on the stage every night and go, 'All right, here we go again...' We're having a great time. That's important. Number one, I think.

Q: It seems like Kevin is the dominant personality in the band.

Kevin: I'll let them answer that.

Mike: Kevin has a lot to say all the time. I have a lot to say too but I never talk in situations like this.

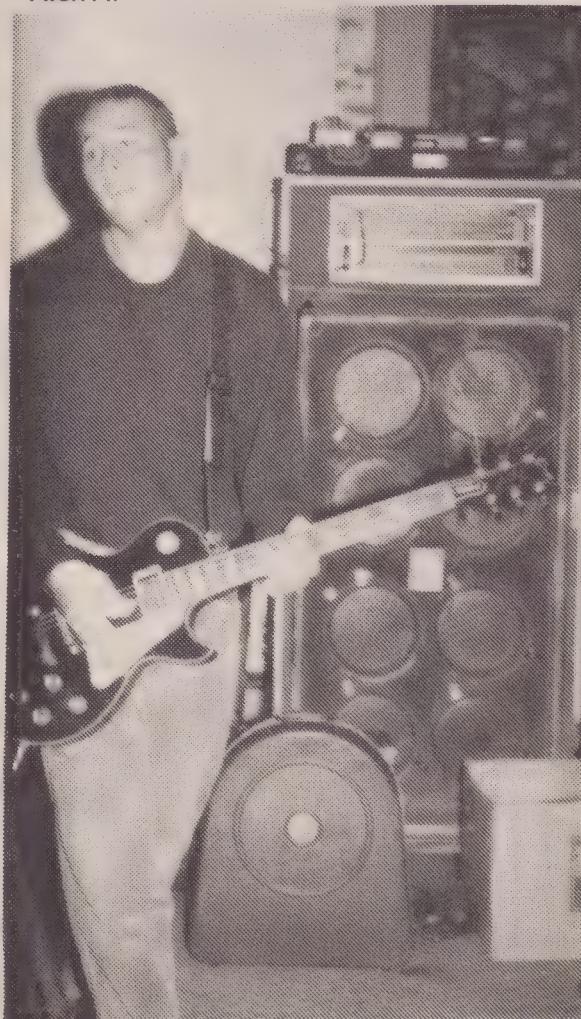
Rick: What do you mean by dominant, though?

Mike: Is he the Paul Stanley of Railroad Earth? Is he the Steve Perry of Railroad Earth?

Q: I mean, if you have a decision to make, does Kevin usually get his way because he talks the most?

Rick: We all vote on it. Sometimes it gets very long and drawn out, because one of us has a different opinion than everyone else. So we do tend to butt heads at times.

Alex A.



Mike: So we do have disagreements, like everybody else. And what do we do to solve them?

All: WE BOWL!!

Kevin: At least if you're butting heads, you know that there's somebody there to butt heads with. Somebody with a brain who cares as much as you do. I am not the leader of the band. We're four equal members. When we make decisions about how the music is done, we're equal.

Mike: That's definitely true. It's just that in a situation like this, Kevin tends to answer more of the questions.

Q: On the first album, *Radium*, Kevin wrote most of the songs. Is he still writing most of the songs?

Mike: Kevin will usually come in with the vocals and the guitar parts.

Rick: And sometimes he'll have an idea for a bass line, or a certain drum part. And then we all play it and flesh out our own parts. And usually Mike will come up with his bass part, and then Al will come up with his own guitar part. And then we switch things around, in the arrangement, and we all take part in that.

Q: Are there any immediately noticeable changes between the first record and the new record you're working on?

Kevin: God, yes. Number one, sound quality.

Mike: The quality of the songs.

Kevin: Just to make a personal confession, I was really disappointed with the way I wrote for the first record. I was playing it safe, you know? What's gonna rock? The clichés. And on this new record, I really think I took chances. Lyrically, I really tried to come with things that mean something to me without being cliché-ish. I still think the last record was a good record, don't get me wrong. But on this record, I really tried to dig deep inside and come up with something that, when I listen to and I'm with other people, I have to go to the other room. Because the things I'm gonna say are personal and about me. And musically, it's totally different.

Rick: It's a lot more diverse. *Radium* was a lot more straightforward, just your standard four/four time, kind of upbeat rock 'n' roll songs. There's a lot more versatility in the dynamics of the songs on the new record. Different tempos.

Mike: You learn new stuff making a new album. You learn how to play more every day.

Kevin: Plus the first record had some old songs that went back to before Rick came into the band. This new one is a true Railroad Earth record. The real McCoy.

Q: Kevin, I know you worship Husker Du but that's a one guitar band, and you have a two guitar band. Do you have any two-guitar bands that you've held up as role models.

Kevin: Well, yeah, I love Husker Du, but let's get one thing clear, I'm not Bob Mould. Mike and I knew that when we started the band, that we were going to need another guitar player, even before Alex came into the group. And Alex has been amazing, more than I ever expected. But two guitar bands?

Mike: Afghan Whigs.

Kevin: Replacements.

Rick: I'd have to say, the Beatles.

Kevin: It's funny though, what I'm mostly influenced by is not two guitar bands, but one guitar bands, like FIREHOSE or Mission Of Burma or Husker Du. It's kind of interesting.

Q: Let's ask Alex, since he hasn't said anything yet. Who are your guitar heroes?

Alex: I really like the way Billy Corgan plays. He's probably one of my more favorite guitar players. Hendrix was really big. But I don't think I play like them, really.

Q: Are you in the pro-Kiss or the anti-Kiss contingent? (We had discussed the pros and cons of Kiss before the interview.)

Alex: Anti! I've been battling these guys for a long time on that.

Rick: Mike and I have pretty much hung together on that. We're the pro-Kiss side. Alex and Kevin are the anti-Kiss side of the band.

Q: So for all intents and purposes, this band is really two years old...

Mike: The band you see in front of you today. Before Rick came into the band, nothing really happened.

Rick: Once I joined the band, I think is when things started to happen. Within a couple of months we had released the first 7 inch, and then *Radium* happened right after that.

Kevin: Yeah, but it's hard for me to me to agree with that.

Q: You probably worked harder the first two years when things weren't going well.

Kevin: I cried more the first two years. I tore my hair out more the first two years. I got depressed more the first two years. The last two years have just felt really good, and I've been able to relax and say, 'I love doing this.' The first two years, I was ready to kill myself.

Q: So are you happy with where you are right now?

Rick: No, not really, but we think this next record is going to take us much more in the direction we'd like to be in.

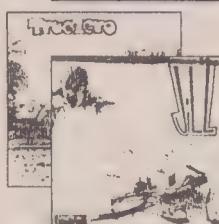
Q: Where do you want to wind up?

Mike: I want to wind up, as much as these guys don't want to hear it, in Mudhoney's niche. Sittin' back with a fat little record deal, making enough money to cover their asses, with a nice solid fan base so we can tour when we want to. They're not all over MTV, they're not all over the radio, they've got a nice little record deal, they've got nice instruments, and they do what they want.

Rick: And I've said the same thing. I want to be a band that's on a good label, a major label, even if that does sound cheesy. But I don't want to be in the spotlight, I don't want to be criticized for every single thing I do, I don't want to be in *Spin* magazine and *Rolling Stone*. I just want to be able to do this for a living, in other words.

Kevin: What I want, number one, is for people that I respect and admire to respect and admire me.

Alex: I would just like to play my instrument for as many people as possible, make a little bit of money while I'm doing it, and do it about ten months out of the year. Definitely take a vacation, take a couple of months off every year, but be able to do this. And for a long time.



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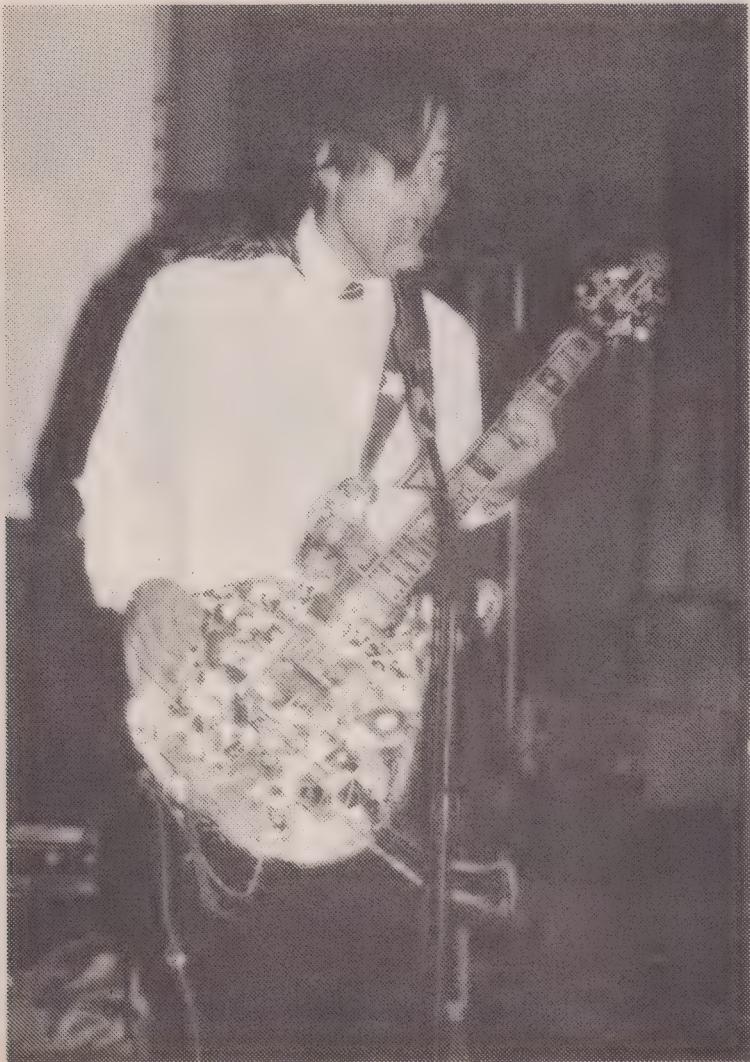
# SCREENHEADS?



# From here to obscurity...

## Get in the van with Tommie Griggz

**TOMMIE GRIGGZ** is a 3 piece alterno-slop-rock band from NJ that for some reason enjoys the torture and torment of the road. Two CD releases and several singles later hereforth the asphalt hippy tales of these 3 brave band guys...uh, whatever. the part of willy the bitchy bass player will be played by willy, co-starring zoli as the poor and pathetic drummer, and me, tim, as the "coulda told you so" tortured artist guitarplayer/singer. hence three dumb guys live and their tales... we are on our tour of the us and lets hope that you enjoy it as much as we did



### Dreams PA

well we took our sweetass time getting to this gig, and everyone was ready to get the tour rolling ... i had to eat some twisted bad hot dog weenie and it gave me the shakes, pains and the sweats..not to mention the pukes ... so after 15 technicolor yawns i was as peachy as ever ... and ready to play. as we are going over the benfranklin bridge, i realize with all the puking going on that i left my guitar on the front lawn of my mom's place ... so we had to go back and quickly .... lest some kid git it and sell it for the 3\$ that it is worth ... so i've puked, had brief alzheimer's , now we are on our way .... A place called dreams in Pennsylvania ... what a shit hole dump, oh and it was cool too ... i sprained my back wrestling with the roaches and the vagrants that lived there ... By the way did i mention that we were late to the gig ... so the other band playing was packing up cause they were s'posed to use our drums and we were so late they didn't think we were coming...but we did ... and we were glad they stayed cause they were the only people in the place ... well there were the 2 go-go poles that added to the aesthetic value of the whole evening's fun ... oh yeah realized that i left every word to every song that i've ever written at that freaking hole .... will have to try and get it tomorrow .... willy hurt his hand bad on the go go pole ... dont ask... I didn't.

### O'Hara

Yee hawwww!!!, pappy jones and grandmaw tooo..heeyuck!!!! I felt as if we entered into a redneck hooker bar. I failed to mention as usual we are wearing matching suits for this tour so we go out on stage and the sound on stage is non existent. which is ok, we are used to this type of stuff. my amp was too low, drums too light, and bass too damn loud. oh wait the part of the bitching band member will now be played by me. so the gig sucked, we hated the people, they were traumatized by us, i think, and well we sold records. go figure. hey, got my words back from that other club. cool

### The Electric Banana Pittsburgh PA

Today we had too many problems. not enough cash, our drummer lost all his cash and credit cards. not that that was a lot but it was plenty enough to fuck us. The van was falling apart, bought the replacement part and even that part was defective too, so i just bagged the whole show on the spot. what a tour right ? it gets even better

### The Milestone, Charlotte NC

we got up at 4:30 am and drove straight to charlotte. zoli has been buying things. hmm? i thought that he was broke.? i am too tired to care. Well, all our quick arrival hopes were shattered with a gaper's delay at 2 different accident sites.

one was a fried trailer camper toasted to a crisp, overturned and lookin mighty scary too, and some car before that bonked up on the side of the road...oh and then we hit construction ... tax payer dollars at it's finest ... to travel 2 miles took us 1 hour ... I know I can't help being somewhat on a dark sarcastic overtone ... but let me assure you that we love touring ...

we got to the milestone and there were lots of kids there and a bunch of our friends and we were all happy ... today was only s'posed to be a promo night but we conned our way into actually being able to play tonight so ... we did .... willy got completely naked ...the kids liked that... and we only played 3 songs to tease for tomorrow's show (at the milestone.) after the club closed, we jammed with the soundman and the slugs, rotating instruments until 3:30 in the morning. no one there, just the 4 of us. zoli had a bit too much to drink and lay to pasture in the bus ... after which we attempted to find one of our friend's houses ...and did not succeed, so we pulled into a condo complex and slept in the parking lot till the sun baked the shit out of us in the bus (old 1985 8-seater green school bus gutted and carpeted for band's private sexual needs and desires) ... boop, sun's up!! and we found our friend's apt ... ahh, our first showers this week ... later on today, we are going back to the milestone to rehearse while our friend ryan cleans the place up for tonight. ryan left and we are crashing in the parking lot of the milestone till it opens back up... ok so now we are sittin around .... 2hours 3hours, 4hours ... fuck us ... welp.... time to get ready.

#### The Milestone Charlotte NC

there are at least 85 people here tonight and energy is flying out a mile a minute we are pumped and all the bands have been fucking great so far. so the crowd is pumped too.

willy was gonna get naked but people were trying to give him money to stay dressed, corny as it seemed. we actually were asked and did an encore. great show tonight, great show!!!!

#### Radio Interview - Gaston College NC

This radio station has been playing the shit out of our records so we went in and did a live interview and all that neat stuff ... ya know, yackin' to the 10 people in the parking lot that actually have antenna's on their cars ... the van had to go and bust down in the college parking lot ... so we abandoned it to do the interview and will try and fix it later ... the interview was a whole lot of fun , stupidity and sexual abandon.... and the next thing we knew we were tired, cranky, and out the door to fix the bus... which zoli is worth his weight in gold when it comes to the mechanic troubleshooting detail ... he diagnoses and then we repair ...which he did and then we did and then we split split split. its off to Fat City

#### Fat City (Charlotte NC)

besides the fact that the first band on were being complete dickks and i hated them within the first 5 minutes of talking to them, and the fact that we were all tired from waiting in the club lot from 4pm till like 8 pm, i was also cursed with an amp that buzzed so loud that it went over the guitar itself !!!!!!! oh yeah we all ate free... bad meatball sandwiches and had the nastiest stomach aches and grumbles. God, i like to bitch bitch and bitch ... bunch of our charlotte friends came out to see us and the show was fun afterwards we all partied in the club after it closed and stayed up really late. zoli our drummer smoked opium thinking that it was pot so he was high as a kite, he tends to fall down alot when he gets high or drinks too much. It's quite funny actually ... we finally crashed at like 5am and went to sleep in our bus in the club parking lot. that food really sucked even on into the

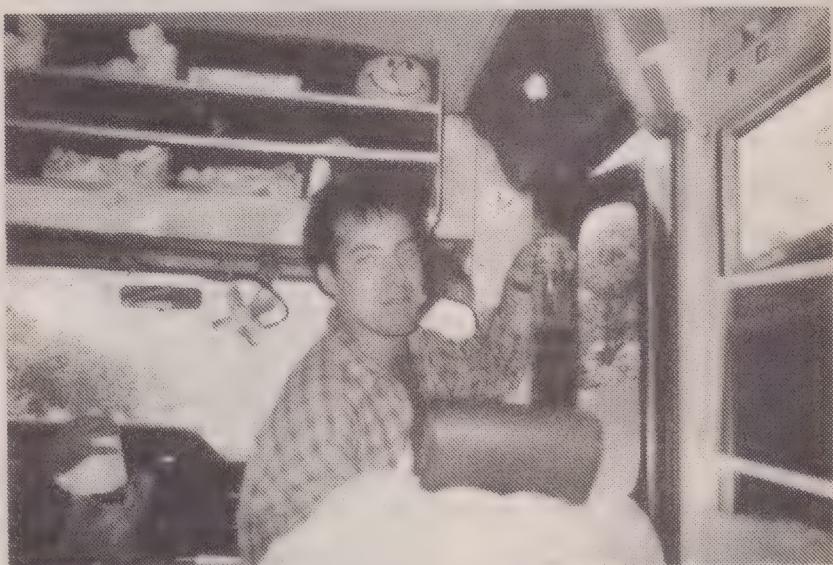
night. crickets rule the night .

#### The Ocean Plaza Ballroom, NC Beach

We pulled up after a 4 hour drive and looked for a parking spot for an hour ... nah but almost, we went into the club and it was something out of disco fever, disco ball and all ... the place was huge ... we were playing with our good buddies Inkpot Monkey and we were really amped to see all our buds ... lots of people were there and it was just real cool ... b4 and in between our bands they played surf films ... during our set, peter from inkpot monkey jammed with us ..and so did other people we knew... this kinda happens to us in this area ... its a jammin free for all ... after that we went swimming in the ocean with good friends till 330 in the morning ... little did we know that a week later that hurricane would rip that whole beach apart and all the land and houses around it

#### The Lionfish PA

early this morning we picked up our co-hostess on the tour, emily from Reasonably Martians Zine and headed to the show... we got as far as VA and overheated the bus and had to wait it out as it cooled down... we were really dirt tired for this show ... i dont even think we put on our suits ... which were probably stinkin from our sweaty dirty bodies being in them over and over again ... i think we were actually quite delirious really ... I played half of my set with 2 busted strings until sidedoor johnnies guitarist lent me his guitar ... and i cant even remember but I think I broke one of his too ... oh man what a lousy gig...



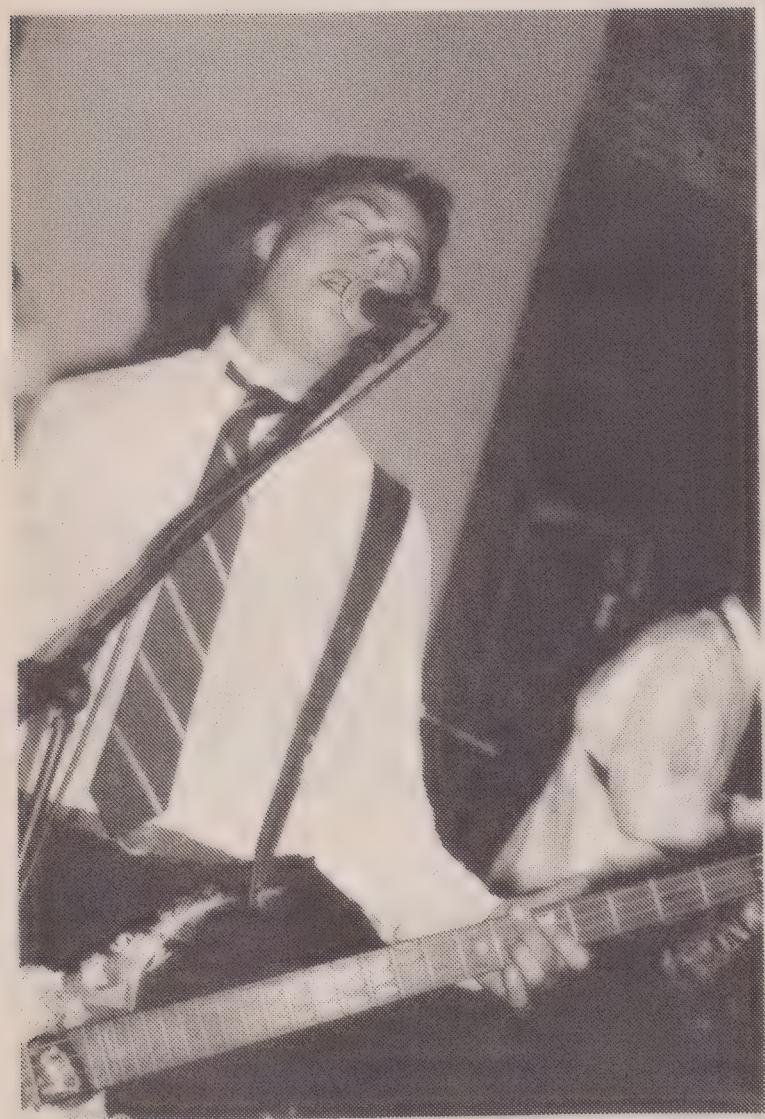
Willie on the road; that ain't apple juice in that jar he's holding...

#### RT's Oaklyn NJ

This is kinda like a home roost to us, as much as we think the place sucks. it's always cool to play a place that is real easy to get to for all the people who come to see you. So there wasn't much of a crowd but it picked up as the night wore on. For some reason I chose not to curse this evening , a personal goal of sorts, and I did it. I know, so what? all that will out the window by the next gig.

Cafe Seattle - Show cancelled due to L.A. Disease (lame ass disease)

Lost Horizon Syracuse NY



Now here was a show that we were looking forward to ... we get to play with our good buds, 99 Cent Special, who if you don't know by now broke up ... their last show was with us this very night and what a night it was. We were ready to sweat, ready to molest and ready to show the weenies ... we had a great jam, I had to borrow 99's amp cause mine went nuts ... willy was flirting with all the 14 year olds (the sick pedophile that he is) and zoli ... who knows what he was up to but we had a cool ass jam and then the main event, the thrashing demolition of 99's last ever show ... between amy's exposed nipples and pyrotechniks, steve's delirium and darren's relentless tribal drumming, everyone in the place was transfixed ... then they whipped out the jelly and all hell broke loose ... it was everywhere on everything and then, after a super set and 20 minutes of smashing equipment alone ... it was over, the last show of 99 cent Special was over ... the club threatened to sue 99 for \$1000 and probably will... we all bolted to the 99 house and drank ourselves silly and after 10 beers, zoli started telling really bad jokes ... like he always does ... what a night.

CT Radio Show cancelled

we were all too tired or hungover.

#### The Russian Lady, Hartford CT

This show was canceled, can't find Willy he's off somewhere

#### The Skylight, Wilmington NC

Well, we werent sure if we were even going to have a gig or not cause of hurricane Fran's devastation to the coast and all ... but they got their power back and the curfews were lifted and thus we drove the drive to the great Wilmington in NC, our big daddy of touring love where no band member leaves sober and if anything needing a rehab afterwards ... and to our mayhem and wonderful surprise none other than the great magazine mogul Jim The Traveling Man Testa was there to see us suck at our best and be the best at the worst. As usual we had our Wilmington friends sit in on all of our set so Rick D and Todd M were there to jam with us on stage..did I mention that willys bass is warping bad so are zoli's drumheads and I lost my license somewhere and cant find it ... Had a real good time jam, mon, like rejects on crack and when we were done proceeded to defy the laws of alcohol consumption... free beer is free beer ... boys will be boys ... we still talk about the chinese food that rick bought us later that ight .... man that was religious and zoli just kept droppin' everywhere ..he has some serious equilibrium problems when mixed with brew..... Next day, our tour pardner Emily got into a car accident while in her home town and bashed up her body and car... so she will be staying home for the remainder of the trip. she's ok , but she canceled her trip with us ... too bad, we liked having her with us...

#### The Red Lion Augusta GA

Show got canceled we drove there and monday night fucking football beat us out. oh well fuck them, we are gonna drive straight to Atlanta one day early and promo. it was crazy on our way to Atlanta - 50 no lie cop cars and undercover cars went whizzing by us and we found out later a couple miles from Dottie's that this guy had his kids taken away by a welfare place and he went into the place and shot 3 people and was sniping others outside

#### Donnie's Atlanta GA

well we are here to promo early and all we did was drink and yak and hand out flyers and heckle people ... tried talking to this one band from boston and he just

couldn't get out of his self-absorbed egotistical coma that he was in so I left him in mid conversation... we even sold records and didn't even play here yet ... we left Dottie's when it closed and went to this bar the highlander where you get a dogtag ff you can get blitzed and still leave standing. well me and willy got our dog tags and we met people and crashed at their place ... we left zoli in the bus in the highlander parking lot, kinda made us laugh all night long .... well when we got up we got the van and went to burger krap and ate breakfast/lunch, shaved bathed and shit, and then stayed in the parking lot all day waiting for our show, dodging a loitering ticket. we kept going in and refilling our drinks for free .... and then zoli went jogging and disappeared for quite some time ... willy slept and I read my book ... tons of homeless people kept coming up and asking us for food/money sex and blessing us ... if they only knew how much cash we DONT have ... we'd be askin them for \$\$\$... the show was a hoot and a half. we jammed with metal bands so that was swell. willy got trashed and kicked the bus door window out goofin around .. zoli got so ripped we had the bartender pretend she hated his guts and he didnt even know why ... and we were laughin our asses off.... later on when we all crashed at her pad she was a real bitch. we left

early and didnt even say goodbye... freakin wacko, really ... zoli still thinks that she actually liked him in some bizarre sexual way ... yea right. ...Oh did I mention that when we were leaving Atlanta I backed up into a very stiff pole and smashed the back door in and busted out the back window ... and I was sober too ... if I were trashed, I never woulda touched that pole ... no way. (pathetic huh???)

#### Zapata's Spartanburg SC

Did I mention that the fumes are so bad in the bus now that we are driving dizzy like..? we will have to fix the back door. there was a long backup, 2 hours for 10 miles... 2 tractor trailers had a head on collision at 60 mph ... needless to say they both died...wow. what a shame. we got to our gig a little early so we hung about in normal band fashion ... and when we finally went in we were the only band except for a jazz band ... well there were only 15 people total in the place and we played to 100's in our minds it was a great show and we sold a bunch of records too ... it was funny on all the flyers for the show it said we were on epic records (goes to show people still dont come out to shows) it just made us laugh ... a drunk in the bar liked us so much he wanted to manage us and give us his house to live in for 6 months ... we dodged him and slept in a gas station parking lot 2 miles away...big drive ahead of us tomorrow ... west virginia where you can marry your sister legally ... and quite lovingly andhave little mutant spawn.

The Niabinghi Dance Hall, Morgantown W. Virginia  
we all had crammed in the bus last night and it was the best 8 hour sleep we all got whew ... zoli though had a case of deadass and was farting up the entire continent busting the ozone and killing all protected wildlife not to mention us in the process. we thought it was more a case of shitass and if he didn't do something soon he was gonna wet himself ..or get himself a case of wuppass from us .... we had an 8 hour plus drive ahead of us ... did you know me and willy are both completly supporting zoli food wise ... toothpaste wise ... shit you'd think the boy was 6 years old with toilet paper hangin out his shorts ... but he's cool we'll manage ... before we drove, checked engine ... the alternator is cracked off the motor, still works tho... we are going to drive with it hanging off... hit our first mountains and the bus dogs a little, but we made it in record time ... exactly 7pm we were in Morgantown ... we pull into a lot to get directions from this van and people and it just happens to be the ban (Pressure Drop from Ohio) that is playing with us ... we were all bullshittin and hanging about and then we took off for food search and they went to the club... then we went to the club, this place has always had a real cool vibe and has excellent monitors and all the coolest bands have played there ... and the last time we were there ... 200+ people were there ... but not tonight ...I'd say a total of 25 were there but we played like a fury and even sold a bunch of records too ... our suits were all squashed and in dire need of a washing ... oh yea some girl was yelling at us about the offensive material we brought with us to hand out... saying we were disgusting and wouldn't give our band the time of day ... ya know she was the first one out on the dance floor going crazy having a great time ... figures.. I was pretty tired so when pressure drop went on I had fallen asleep in the equipment pile by the side of the stage and it was loud and I was still out cold ... we are off to NY and you know what? that alternator is still hanging off and its still doing its alternator duty ... headlights busted out...

#### CBGB's NY

when we got to cb's it was raining and actually quite pleasant so we waited in our 5th out of 8 band lineup to play our wimpy ½ hour set and saw our good friends jim santo and crysti and her friend dee so we played and it was a really hard set to play cause it was hot as heck and we were overdressed and underwatered, so we were sweatin, panting, dripping and melting to death... but we played a really great show and had a really super time doing it so that was our famed cb gig - 6 months to book the 1/2 hour ejaculation of a show... we packed up after the other bands and went to dee and crysti's place and got drunk . so as a recap... the city is a crowded shithole of congested angry little roaches all going crazy for food and domain

eating their young and shoving the old  
The Pyramid Club (Gothic Gay Bar) Canceled  
No one had anything good to say about this place so we were all the more intrigued to play it as a joke upon ourselves but the place canceled no matter how much we tried to convince them so we decided to stay in town for a day longer and stayed with our good friend crysti ... and since we were near Amityville we went to see the house where all the ghosts and murders and possessions happened in 1974 ... plus took our pictures in front of it and got hassled by the police to leave or we'd be ticketed. that was neat... then we went to the town library and researched all the articles in the town papers and then rented the movie so we could compare the place to the movie. Uncanny. this movie magic... we were so thrilled... you're saying "big deal" but we were thrilled like lil' school girls

#### Trinity College Hartford CT- "The Underground"

Too much Amityville Horror, all I had was a bunch of really bad dreams ... so we get to Greenwich and stopped in to see one of our freinds, Tina, and crashed there for the night ... got wasted .... woke up and then got wasted and then watched more movies and then drove to Hartford not too far away. what a place, like a catholic, millitary, prep school for dropout flunkie honor students. There weren't very many people in the club and so we played to 15 or so but it was a very laid back fun show. we were s'posed to do a 2 sets, we just goofed off until there was only time for one ... besides we were the only band scheduled anyway so it didnt matter what we did ... we all had fun and we even got paid \$150 to do the show .... WOW !!! we were peachy ...

well its off to our next location keep doing what you do and do it well .... peace and music till we blend again .... SOOOOOO..... Tune in next time ... when you hear willy say..." zoltan, is that a large rare green cucumber in my hand ? or is tim just happy to see you naked watching the squirrels store their nuts?" Or something like this.... TOMMIE GRIGGZ

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## Thirsty Tour Diary (On tour together with I Farm, August 1 - August 20)

We started booking this tour two months in advance. Everything was completely DIY. Most of the numbers we got were from friends in bands and perhaps only one from *Book Your Own Fuckin' Life*. That thing sucks and I don't encourage using it if you're gonna book a tour. We mapped out where we wanted to go, but since this is punk rock, only 1/3 of those shows happened. Most of the shows were booked on the road. Hey, it's what we do best. So we began this voyage on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1996 and anticipated on playing a show every day until the 20<sup>th</sup>. Our only request was that every show be all ages.

Our first stop, Albany, New York. We wanted to kick the tour off in NYC but if you're a DIY punk band, nobody wants to give you a chance. Let me get it off my chest, club owners suck. And so does Albany. It was all local bands, and they put us on last, so we played to 15 kids in our boxers. The most interesting thing was the name of an exit off Route 87 called Coxsackie. We were almost in tears, laughing so hard.

After learning a new Ramones cover, we played yet another crappy show with cheesy hardcore/metal bands in a church. Some drunk guy kept buggin' us for money and then offered to book his and our bands' on our next tour. Whatever. We stayed at my pal Mike Gold's house, who goes to Cornell University. His little brother beat the living shit out of us with toy rifles and his karate expertise. We then loaded up and headed out towards Wilmington, DE. Home of one of my favorite bands, The Crash, I was really excited to play there. And then we found out Delaware had no state tax. Crazy. The Crash, Super Hi 5, and Reckless Kelly were really cool punk bands while F.O.D. just rocked the VFW hall for almost an hour. They've been around for over 12 years and they had so much energy. I swear they jumped around more than NOFX. This kid Josh hooked us up with a place to stay, beer, and even cooked us dinner (Thanks). At midnight, he took us to this local YMCA. We jumped the fence, I took my clothes off, and yup, we were swimming in DE. All of a sudden this van pulls up and some big hefty looking guy comes walking our way saying he owns the property. Shit. We were busted. But this guy was so nice, he told us to just be careful and he didn't give a shit. Hmm, Delaware people are strange.

West Chester Rock City! Oh yeah, we're to play in a garage with three other bands, including Third Year Freshmen. Super DIY space, with last night's keg still being tapped, local kids playing in the streets, and Plow United on the stereo. A fair amount of kids showed up and it turned into a fun show. I played with the local kids who hung out at the show because their parents were coke addicts. We played cards and I got my ass kicked in a game of War. I bought them Snickers bars only to have them spit it at my face. Well, I tried. Then went for amazing Italian Ices at Rita's Water Ice. Third Year Tom put us up. We watched *My So Called Life* reruns and I then slept in the weight room. (Note: Took shower. Feeling a lot better).

Somehow or another, I got us a show at Reptilian Records in Baltimore, Maryland within 18 hours before we were to play. Although it wasn't publicized, we had an amazing time and Chris X, the owner, loved us. He bought a bunch of our stuff and our 14 year old friend Woody came by too. Full of smiles.

On the road with...

# THIRSTY

by Dave Thirsty



Here's where our roadie Denise took off, and Jaime was to now join us for the remainder of tour. The transaction took place, we all ate shitty pizza and gave the van an oil change. We had the long journey towards South Carolina ahead of us, so we filled up the tanks, got some caffeine (Dr. Pepper) and left Baltimore. We stopped in Virginia to fill up the tank and I got the best cinnamon roll I'd ever had. It was 3:15 am and I'd been driving for hours. So we decided to pull into a rest stop. Arun from I Farm slept on top of the van while the rest crumbled into balls inside our respected vehicles. (Warning: Not comfortable) For some unknown reason we all woke up around 7:30 am and began skateboarding. I went to brush my teeth in the public bathroom and there was a sign saying that you can't bring your guns into the building. Ok.

After passing three thousand signs for South of the Border, we just had to stop. What a disappointment. Jeremy wasted his money on cheap fireworks that sucked. We're playing in Columbia, South Carolina tonight and then need to drive 9 hours to Orlando, Florida for tomorrow's show. We arrived really early in Columbia and the place looked like a dump. We went and got some beer and then I felt really sick. It was also extremely hot and humid plus all I'd been eating was gas station food. I got a super cool bottle of Dr. Pepper and a terrible slice of pizza. We gave out fliers to kids and got our records in the local music stores. The show was in a rad DIY space. There were about 50 kids, most of which say y'all. A really cool band, Blue in the Face played. They rocked in a Pennywise meets Good Riddance kind of way. The show was great. Stephanie and her friends put us up, made tasty spaghetti, and offered us grits for breakfast. The hospitality so far has been overwhelming.

Driving through Georgia, the peach state, the speed limit turned to 70 mph. Oh my god, this was awesome. Every time we saw the sign it was as if we were a child petting a puppy dog. It stopped raining, we began to see palm trees, and thus, came Florida. I don't think any old people were on the road, cuz we were cruising.

The name of the venue was The Grind. We thought MTV dance house and Eric Nies with techno music. But, actually it was a laid back coffee shop in the middle of a shopping center. Our friends GreenSleep kicked off the show and everyone was just stunned with amazement. No shit, those NYC kids rock! I Farm rocked as usual while we played our worst show yet. Nothing but sound problems. Oh well, you get over it. Dillinger Four went on next and blew the roof down. Super fast, catchy, in your face punk rock just the way you like it. They even did dick tricks while the guitarist was tuning.



National Guard was just one of the cool bands we met (above); Jeremy flexes for some fans before stuffing himself back into the Thirsty tour-mobile.

Oh yeah, so far Jeremy had broken a guitar string every show. Just thought I'd embarrass him. Discount concluded the fine evening with sweet pop punk with wonderful melodies and superb vocals. It was a cool night, we got free Dr. Peppers, and my best friend from high school was there. We went back to his house (Billy) in Gainesville and just collapsed, we were so tired. We woke up, went swimming, played NHL Hockey for Sega, went swimming again, played more Sega, and so on. Our show tonight wasn't until midnight so we had a lot of time to kill and relax. We all took showers, got clean and stuff, and Chris even did laundry. Billy's friend Christina cooked us all a huge meal of lasagna. Wow. The show was at a club called the Hardback. Super cool place to play. We got 50 cent drafts all night, played with Vanbuilderass (one of the best bands I've ever seen) and played one of our best shows ever. It was the greatest night yet. I even met my pal Steve's brother. He was super cool and offered us a place to stay although we already had one. People can be so nice. Gainesville was definitely a chill place.

Now off to Tallahassee, Florida. It was a rented out Legion Hall with over 200 people. Adults with flashlights greeted us and directed us towards the load in area. Shit, these people know their shit. Here, we met Portland, Oregon's National Guard. Really cool band, super fast, very political, but most of all, amazingly friendly. Also, Susan and Punk Uprisings was on tour with National Guard and documenting/filming the whole thing. So we got filmed and well, whatever. Before we went on, Susan asked if it was ok if she filmed Thirsty, and I told her no because of our copyright laws and contracts. I tried to keep a straight face but Jaime and all the National Guard boys were laughing hysterically. I told her I was just kidding and sure it'd be cool. Susan wasn't too happy with me. Susan doesn't like to be made fun of. Susan also doesn't like to be wrong about anything, but that's a whole 'nother story. I Farm then made it clear that the show had to have no affiliations with any corporate or major label people. That's I Farm for ya. DIY or die for the kids. Yeah, kill big brother!

We drove to Miami. Really excited. We're playing at Cheers, a lesbian bar with one of the nicest club owners you'll ever meet. This was such a rad show. Over 500 people must have been there. The bill was Digger, Against All Authority, Swank (suck) Thirsty, I Farm, Nobodys, Pee Tanks, and National Guard. Wow. It was a long night but total fun. Against All Authority were amazing. They gave us what they made and that's just flat out cool. Let alone, they rock the fucking pants outta ya. We were supposed to stay with them but things fell through so we went to Denny's. You can always count on Denny's. But on the way there, we got stopped by Miami police who informed us to "get the fuck outta this neighborhood. You don't wanna be around here." So we took their advice and kept driving. We pulled into the parking lot, got harassed by more cops with attitudes, and then entered Denny's while it was still pitch dark out. Lets just say since we had no other place to crash, we sat down, ordered food, then hours later walked out and it was light out. Fuck. Still haven't slept. We go back to the cars, lie down, sorta. I try calling my uncle who lives in Miami but no luck. We decide to drive back to Gainesville and crash at Billy's. The next two days,

both our shows fell through, so we relaxed, went swimming, played more Sega, and ate even more Denny's.

It seems a lot of scenes are falling apart and that sucks. It takes a lot to keep a good DIY space going and if your scene has one, you shouldn't take it for granted. Put more shows on and support bands.

Next stop, Atlanta, Georgia. We drove by the Olympic stadium and I guess it's cool if you're into sports and stuff, but... well... nothing. We fucked with the club owner and sound guy since only one of us was on the bill. But we jumped on stage and all sang for each other so they had no idea. We weren't selling that much merchandise but it's been nothing but fun. Little 5 points is where we were and it was our last show with National Guard. Sad. We all celebrated afterwards by treating ourselves to Taco Cabana. Yummy.

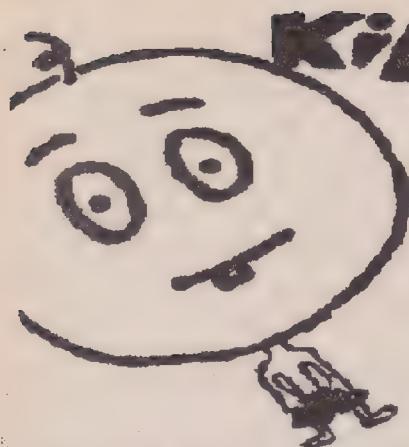
Then came the show we'll never forget. Knoxville, Tennessee. The club, Gryphon's, was a lounge, laundromat, and bar all in one. A bunch of local drunks were inside while a slew of punk kids were hanging outside. We chilled with them for a while. Then the owner tells us he's not letting kids under 21 in. Fuck that. I tried to talk to him to see if we could close off the bar area so we could play for the kids. Nope. He had to be a fucker about it. Kids tried kicking the doors open and sneaking in but the local drunks would get physical with them. Fuck this, don't ever play Gryphon's in Knoxville. A riot broke out and the owner got the shit kicked outta him along with bottles broken over his face. We immediately got our stuff outta there amongst the blood and took off. What fucking stupidity. Violence is no solution. Grrr....

Indianapolis, Indiana is the next destination. We arrived early and hung out with Johnny Puke of Cletus. They were a rad band and played a Queers cover. Walker was disappointing, while Dillinger Four fucking rocked once again. The place was a collective with zines all over the place. Felt like home, especially coming from Knoxville, TN.

Drive to Illinois only to sleep in the drivers side at a rest stop. We arrive in DeKalb, IL next morning and greeted by Tina and the Mushuganas. Super nice people with a huge cozy house. Complete suburbia, oh yeah. Eat more Denny's and gas station food. Uhh. It was a free show and we played with a band called pretentious assholes. Great name, they were death metal. But the Mushuganas took the cake. One of the best punk bands around. They bought us pizza and we sat around while Pete from Oblivion kept us fully entertained. He is one crazy bolt of energy.

Then we played in Detroit, Michigan and Toledo, Ohio. Nothing exciting happened except for the fact that we all got treated to hit balls in the batting cages. They gave us helmets too, but since we're so punk, we wore them backwards. Besides that, tour concluded and we drove back to Ithaca, NY. Since then I've quit my band to do my fanzine full time along with school. The tour was an overall success and I'd do it all over again in a second. We met so many rad people and got the pleasure of playing with rockin' bands. We sold a shitload of records, zines, tee shirts, and CD's, while coming home with a hundred bucks in the band account. But then there's the phone bill...





# KID WITH MAN HEAD TOUR DIARY

This summer, the Jersey shore's Kid With Man Head set off on their first cross-country tour. Here is a week in the lives of five of the most whacked-out pop-punkers to ever hit the road in a van...

## The cast of characters....

George - (aka Drum Boy) Drums

Chris - (aka Kid Hormel, Kid Kavorkian) Guitar

Matt - (aka Gay Elvis, Duane, Melvis, Rash, Matt Loaf) Bass

Mike - (aka Zilka) Singer

Brendan - Roadie

## DAY 0

Not packed yet, Pete calls to play the Saint before we leave. Says "Yo dudes" a lot, so we say OK for \$50 gas money. Some old people flip around on the floor in that muck (beer & dirt) during the show. We go home and Brendan is already there, without his passport (left it at home). This is the first of a string of incidents that leads me to believe he is partially brain dead...he should fit right in).

I'm falling asleep as I'm driving NORTH towards Brendan's house about 20 minutes into the trip.

Thank god we played that night. It was the right way to kick things off. I don't want to think of the assault I take if it sucked. Thank god it didn't. Night one in the van went pretty smooth barring the few times it stalled, perhaps an omen of things to come. Sure enough around noon in the deepest reaches of fuck your sister Kentucky we stop for gas and the van doesn't "Start Right Up" (one of the many amusing, yet annoying catch phrases of Zilka's)...Battery? The slack jaw at the service counter does his best to give us directions to Toys R Us, although we asked for KarParts. As we keep firing question after question the poor gas attendant becomes even more bewildered. George attempted to help him understand a little better by conducting a makeshift puppet show, several toothless children gather. Amidst all the commotion an elderly gray bearded Harley sort emerges with a pork rib in one hand and a wrench in the other. Pushing Chris to the ground, he mutters a sentence of mostly vowels, pops open the hood, spits on one of the battery receptors and wham "Starts right up!" Right now I'm in a ball on the floor in the back of the Van praying for my life! Mike can't go straight! The van is swinging like fuck. It feels like I'm in a boat or something. Odds are we're not going to make it back.

## Day 1

We hung around the outskirts of Lexington, Kentucky for the better part of the day. Mostly trying to kill time until it was time to make for the club. So we find ourselves "caving" at a place called the "Batcave". It was pretty cool. For about 10 minutes.

So we play our first show ever in Lexington at a club called the House of Heresy. It goes off without a hitch and everyone there thought we rocked. Yeah, it was amazing, all 12 people in the club (excluding the soundman) introduced themselves to us.

Well, that night we stayed at "Ham Hands" house. She was tagged this dubious moniker by Gay Elvis because well, her hands looked and smelled like, HAM! Things gradually went downhill that night as Ham Hands put on a one-woman performance for the KWMH video camera. Spanning the spectrum from bellowing this incredible mountain lion roar (This roar was so frightful and lifelike that it made Forest pee in his pants) to belting out some opera tunes, some sizzling show tunes (oh, did I mention that the whole time she was tripping on acid) a Jefferson airplane song. It's 4am, everyone is bombed and sleepy and she's wired on acid - ...*George interjects "oh, oh, oh fat girl, please go away. Tripping your fat rat face off please just let me sleep. I think I'll let bands stay at my house so I can torture them like this.....*

It's 4:45 and she's crushing, I mean sitting on George's back giving him the old Ham hands massage. Then she jumps on Chris' and gives him the same treatment. George smiles at me while giving that look; without saying anything I know what he means.

## Day 2

Wake up @ noon...Eggs & pancakes by Godzilla. Ham Hands cooked us up this full-on breakfast. That Ham Hands is really, really nice. We find out after we departed her pad, that she tried to rape Forest in the living room after we all fell asleep. Forest was desperately trying to wake Gay Elvis, who was sleeping two feet away, but to no avail, as he wasn't technically sleeping, he was in an alcohol induced coma. (The first night of many more to come) Too bad for Gay Elvis, he probably would have taken fatty to town.

Unfortunately, we had no show tonight because our show in Cleveland got canceled at the last minute. That's OK cause we booked another show Cleveland on august 29<sup>th</sup>. So we decide to drive a ways out of Lexington towards Louisville and find a place to camp for the night. It's really hot so we decide to rent 2 canoes and do some fishing. Forest and Marvin Gaye Elvis in one, Chris, George, and Mike in the other. Forest paddled like hell, Gaye Elvis sat back and enjoyed the scenery. George fished his ass off but with no luck. Forest didn't have a real fishing pole, so he tried to trick the fish with the old "dildo on the fishing pole" gag. He didn't come close and on top of that, you guessed it, he dropped the dildo into the lake, never to be seen again.

After canoeing we decide to hike up Mt. Everest and run down as fast as we could to the pool. The chick lifeguard let us in free and we kept trying to get her to let us stay at her house for the night. She seemed very scared and said "no" very politely. We asked again and

seemed very scared and said "no" very politely. We asked again and again. We begged. I mean, 5 sweaty guys come running out of the woods all smelly and dirty, wouldn't you let them stay at your pad? Of course you would!! Well, turns down the offer of having us stay and then Chris tells her not to worry, we'll just follow her home. Now she is really scared... George interjects- *Has anyone lost as many things in their life as Forest has lost in the last 24 hours???*....

We end up camping, and it's not bad at all. Except we set up our tents on an incline and when we try to sleep all the blood rushes to our skulls. We sit around the fire singing old Descendents and Weston songs. Gay Elvis sleeps in the van.

#### **Day 3**

8am - we decide we're bored of Kentucky, so we pack up and George decides that camping wasn't worth paying for. So he hightails the van past the park ranger at the entrance. We risk possible jail time but save \$12... George interjects - *I woke this morning with icicles on my nose all fucking stiff and shit, camping is for dopes anyway. I get out of my tent and ever so quietly walk over to the other tent, I peek in the window and notice Mike's shorts are down around his ankles. For a second I'm like "Weird" but not really a big deal. Then a second later I notice Gay Elvis is just sitting there staring at Mike's ass pussy with a big smile on his face. I pull tent stakes out of the ground and it falls on top of them.*

We're on our way to Ft. Wayne Indiana. Big show tonight. Everyone is pumped. The van is running SMOOTH....Mike is in the back of the van popping steroids, Forest is reading a porno mag, Chris is picking his nose, Gay Elvis is reading his Harlequin Romance novel of the month. We arrive at our destination around 5pm although the drive only should have taken 3 hr. Sneetch (a.k.a. Richie) cooked us up this feast we when got there. Spaghetti w/ homemade tomato sauce, garlic bread, beer, fudge brownies.. Jackpot! Sneetch was a funny guy, about 23 years old, married. He was very outgoing and as we quickly realized, had no qualms about telling us of the time(s) he spent in jail for a crime he "didn't commit". Yeah Right!! He looked like Richie Cunningham from Happy Days, only with a Satanic twist.

*Fort Wayne: A small punk rock hole in the attic of somebody's house with quite an eclectic gathering of people: mohawks, skins, redhairs...Most interesting were a couple with their love child, a young kid about 6 or 7 yrs old. As luck would have it this evil pair had*

*seen the KWMH coaster the week before and were instantly taken by our affinity for kicking small defenseless children in the teeth. After a short conversation the duo quickly offered up their pride in joy for our amusement. To let you in on a little secret we never really had kicked any children before and it's not as easy as you might have imagined. A lot of times he managed to duck and more often than not we just kicked him in the gut or the side of the head. But after all this warm up I can tell you we were ready to rip the attic up or sweat the attack up in Zilkas case who actually spent more times slipping and falling in his own pools of sweat than singing.*

We left for the show around 9 o'clock. The venue was really cool, and funny thing, Forest says he's allergic to the place. We laugh and ignore him. The show was cool, many kids showed up and jumped around like maniacs. No lie, the club was like 120 degrees and we sweated our butts off. Sold some decent merchandise. Not bad for a Monday night. We head back to Sneetch's house, Chris sleeps in the van, Forest battles the cats & the fuzz balls on the floor, and Mike soaks the couch with his Italian / Indian (Sioux) sweat as the temperature cools down to 85 degrees.

#### **Day 4**

After a tough night sleep, ever shielding ourselves from the random yet deadly attacks of cats and turtles. We wake and eat some snacks that Sneetch's wife bought. Man, some people are really fucking cool to just take a band of freaks into their house for a night and set them up with good food and most typically, as we would come to find, a nice cat-haired infested floor to sleep on. George also wakes up in a ball of sweat, and decides to have a scalding hot cup of coffee. Fucking ingenious.

We packed up the van and headed off to Bloomington where GE would declare "I got a good feeling about this". This has always been known as a cry of doom that would often merit a smack in the mouth or some other horrible reprimand..... Chris interjects *Sometimes I wonder that if Indiana didn't exist, would corn be scarce? Probably not. The population would grow more corn somewhere else, like in Iowa or something. But maybe, if you took a rake that stretched 500 miles in length and raked the whole state flat from west to east and dropped the remnants in Staten island, we can make a new Indiana, maybe rename it, maybe plant trees and Venus fly-traps all over. Or we could just leave it as is, barren, and full of just bugs and gophers... Then we can maybe auction off all*



**Sweatin' to the oldies in Fort Wayne, Indiana**

*the land( cause mike and me would figure out a way to own title to it) to the highest bidder and make quick cash to pay off this crappy tour. Indiana Sucks!!!!*

In this case though it was true as we stumbled upon one of our finest moments of fortune, a winery with a free tasting session! We pull up and the van unloads with a cloud of dust. Big Billboard reads "Oliver Winery - Free wine tasting". Pull the fuck over. It's 2pm and 100 degrees. We look like one of those prison buses that clean up highways with 5 dregs of society filing out of the van into the wine tasting place. OK - THE DEAL... There's like 20 different wines that they make on the premises. We try them all.. Bombed after the first 4 or so. At this point we all have the tasting procedure down to a T. Keep the base of the class on the table, and rotate with just enough force so the wine reaches the lip of the glass (this aerates the wine and brings out its full aroma) then you take a big whiff, look at each other around the table, say something like "it smells kinda fruity" then chug it down. We lost interest in the real tasting procedure after like 5 wines. We were bombed and reduced to slamming each wine down as soon as the waitress poured it. We each left with a bottle or two in brown paper bags. Drunk. Sweating. And Poorer. And it was only 3pm. Unfortunately for Gay Elvis, Forest had cleverly conned him out of his license (to use as a fake ID for himself) saying something to the accord of "hey let me see that funny picture". Angered by Forest's ruse, GE set off to get in the joint the only way he knew how, making people feel guilty. So grabbing Forest by the ear he yanked him out of the Winery and yelled at him until he was sobbing like a child. With all that out of the way we consumed 2 dozen glasses of wine, periodically sneaking Forest wine in one of the spit bottles, he was happy to get it.

*Chris interjects- the worst thing about a show is wolfing down 5 slices of pizza 30 minutes before you're supposed to play. It rests in your stomach like a brick. It makes me almost nauseous, to the point where I can't talk to anyone or concentrate on anything. For me this happens all the time. The same thing when I'm snowboarding. I've grown use to no one having a watch on, and not having a clock in the van. In fact, I like having no concept of time. It could be 8am or 2pm and I wouldn't know the difference. But this is both good and not so good. Like if everyday you didn't have a watch, you'd learn to figure out the time by checking the angle of the sun. It could definitely help one day if you're broke, watchless & homeless sleeping in a cardboard box on the streets of Buffalo, NY and you wake up and look up and say "Yep, it's probably around 1pm", then go back to sleep....*

We play tonight at a place in Bloomington, IN called the Bluebird. It's a nice set up and the promoter Kerry is really cool. The band is allowed 4 free beers each, and once again Forest is psyched as he can drink again tonight. The show went off well. Well it was going well until Mike busted out "the old dildo on the fishing pole" trick and we watched in horror as a room full of bible belt smiles turned to frowns in a matter of seconds.. Then Forest dressed up in the "Wacky Clown" costume for the first time and jumped around on stage and basically scared everyone in the crowd. I think most people were kinda afraid of us. But we sounded good, I think we're

in a groove. We made \$92...

Gay Elvis meets this chick who he went to school with in New Jersey at the show. She doesn't recognize him without his Warrant/Slayer/slaughter/just plain metalizer hair do. Anyway, after a few minutes we're back at her pad fighting each other over the only bed. And guess what, she has a cat. We hang out in her yard talking for an hour or so. She started off being pretty cool, but in the end, she was just another annoying vegetarian trying to come off as this noble humanitarian nature freak acupuncturist, but she didn't know anything about animal cruelty, acupuncture, or anything worth listening to, so we ditched her on forest and went to sleep.

#### DAY 5

We get up this morning around 9am and within 5 minutes of showering, we went outside into the flaming inferno known as the Indiana summer and of course Mike is soaking wet with like 3rd degree burns and pieces of flesh hanging off his body.

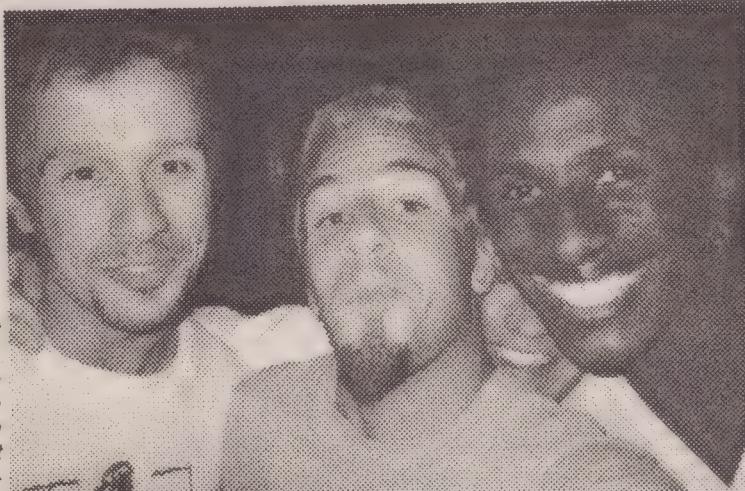
We're off to play The Backroom in Flint, MI tonight. The speed limit is 70mph in Michigan (this would be the best thing about the whole state) and someone will probably crash the van. Mike can't sleep in the van whenever Forest is driving. "He does a good job, but I can't help think he has temporary lapses of consciousness. I mean the kid lost like 6 lighters, his passport 4 times, etc...etc....I hope he

doesn't misplace the van while we are sleeping. And by the way, if I don't spank him soon I'm going to explode" Good news for tomorrow, it's only going to be 95 degrees.

We show up at the Backroom in beautiful (yea right) downtown Flint, MI. Our T-shirts are done and should have arrived here today, so we're all happy. The chick bartender (Kelly) is hot. The hottest chick we've seen thus far. Now we're flying high, hot bartender who is already giving us free beer and new T-shirts in Flint. We're all getting pumped about the show until gay Elvis chimes in "I've got a good feeling about

tonight." Mike wants to kill him every time he says this, as we know he just jinxed the show. The bar owner, Brian is really cool. He plays in this band call L.O.A and he spoke with this raspy voice. He treats us nice. We later find out through some people in the bar that he's into weird stuff. Stuff that you couldn't even fathom. Well maybe you could. When I heard some of these stories I was floored, even Mike was taken back. A few minutes before we're about to play, Kelly's roommate shows up. I don't remember her name so we'll just call her Butthole. She's got a tattoo of a Butthole on her back. Kelly introduces us and within seconds she's trying to push her finger up Gay Elvis' butt. We all laugh at first, even Gay Elvis. After the fifth or sixth time, Gay Elvis starts to get scared. We all laugh, happy it's not us.

We play a show tonight to about 12 people. It sucked... We sold 4 CD's and 2 T-shirts and made a little over \$100. So money wise it was good. Plus free beer. Kelly's invites us to stay at her apartment. How much do you want to bet she has a cat or two? We stagger into Kelly's around 3am and to our unfortunate surprise we had awoken a furious "Butthole" with all of the clamor. Forest and Chris quickly retreat to a nearby closet, where they would spend the night sleeping



George and Chris with the guys from Buck O Nine



**White water rafting... now that's punk rock.**

a hard jab into his ass actually ripping his pants. Poor Ge starts to cry and doubles over in a heap. Warning him that if he doesn't get up and take his punishment like a man "she would sit on his face", GE pretends to play dead. After sniffing him a couple of times Butthole is satisfied she has killed him and goes to sleep.

**DAY 7**

we roll into Fargo ND early in the afternoon, Canada is coming tomorrow and we decide to treat ourselves to a hotel room to prepare for the ruse we're about to pull on the Canadian border. George's dad gave us a bunch of coupons for cheap rooms at the holiday inn, but only one city was willing to accept them. fortunately, it couldn't have come at a better time. within five minutes of check in, forest had completely cluttered the room with his gear. a collection of junk he would ritualistically unpack and have spread out around the room at every crash pad, but this time there would be no one to stop him from taking out that dead opossum or whatever the hell that thing was. "lots of people sleep with stuffed animals", he said. who cares, at this point we were just happy to be able to sleep in real beds. Chris wasn't that happy, he shared the bed with forest...load in time and we were off to "Ralph's". CEO's van was already parked outside the club and I went up to say hi to the other band, (a lookout! band called couch of eureka)...to put it mildly, it smelled like rotting flesh. The roadie was sitting up against a wall with his shoes off and a swarm of flies were buzzing circling his feet, they wouldn't land, they just circled. the stench filled my nose to the point where I couldn't breath. to be polite I turned my head every time I vomited. I

think they appreciated that. we talked for a while and they were all very nice people (we would later find out that they also shared forests' little carcass collection hobby). as far as the show goes, pretty much ManHead status quo, the sound man never showed up and as usual George ended up doing sound for both bands which really didn't matter anyway. after one song, Zilka kicked in the monitor and knocked over a speaker. so, it pretty much sounded like crap from there on, the people liked it any way. tomorrow, we will attempt to cross the Canadian border, but due to the checkered past of one of us who shall remain nameless (GE). we're crossing our fingers. (To be continued...)

**Kid With Man Head**  
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**Jersey Bands**  
**Do You Have A Tour Diary**  
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Welcome to **deconstruction**, the latest preview of what's new in the world of experimental recordings. It was quite a summer for noise and ambient artists this year. Hell, there were even a few notable shows here in Nashville. That's not really cynicism shining through, I'll just never be truly happy until the Knitting Factory decides it would be best to pack up and move to Tennessee. This trip around the block is made up lots and lots of noise. Why we distinguish between sounds and noise or music and noise, I don't understand. Most people seem to have negative reactions toward noise. It seems that the distaste for noise comes from an unsettled dispute with the principles of control. Total control is something a lot of people cannot function without. Control is comfort. Noise takes the control out of our surroundings, thus it leaves people feeling vulnerable. Where the real confusion comes in is with the whole notion of vulnerability. Your average, prolonged noise (such as one of these discs below) can't hurt you. We sped all day, every day, blocking out noises we don't want to hear. Who would ever dream of getting pleasure out of noise? But at the same time, what kind of culture do we have when there is someone who has the job of writing about noise? A noise critic. What the hell is that? Enough rambling, there's work to do.

If you've heard talk of the grueling noise scene in Japan, you've probably heard of **Masami Akita**. Akita is credited with the launch of the Japanese noise yakuza way back in 1981 and, righteously enough, is dubbed the God of noise. It wasn't until recently though, that his projects were made readily available in the U.S. Thanks to the freaks at Relapse/Release Records, you can now find all of the Asian tension that your mortal little head desires. Akita's most notorious project, **MERZBOW**, is among the six groups to release full length CD's as a part of Relapse/Release Records, "Uneasy Listening" campaign.

The latest **MERZBOW**, entitled *Pulse Demon*, is the most relentless display of high tonal bludgeoning that I have experienced to date. Put yourself in Descartes 'brain in a vat' pondering and add a little hydrochloric acid to the vat. Now what does that sound like? Why **MERZBOW**'s *Pulse Demon*, naturally. I'm not kidding, this stuff is of extremely high potency. Listening to *Pulse Demon* sears away everything and replaces the world that was once around you with an ever mutating ride of contortion and speed. On "Ultra Marine Blues", Akita creates an almost aquatic piercing noise. To that he alternates between a lower frequency loop, which grows into a familiar alarm siren, and various incidental spats of electricity, useful in a depiction of modern struggles of power. The funny thing about hardcore noise artists is that you can never quite figure out if the artist conjured the noise or the noise conjured up the artist. It doesn't matter, this stuff is good... even when the joke is on the critics. This is definitely not for everybody, and not for just anytime. Noise takes patients to hear properly, and I might add with

**MERZBOW**, it's patients well spent. The packaging is an incredible venture in itself and there are only 3000 of these babies, so consume, consume!

If Akita is the God of noise, **Maso Yamazaki** makes up the other 2/3's of the trinity. Under the guise of **MASONNA**, Maso has been blowing Marshall amps since about 1987. Remember those old Dry Lungs compilations? If so, you've no doubt heard **MASONNA**. He's hard to forget. His latest release, *Inner Mind Mystique*, is busy with perpetual abrasions: both electronic and vocal. Where Akita endures with a constant density, Maso takes a slightly more perforated approach to his layering. This space allows room for Maso's helpless screams and general feelings of manipulation to sink in firmly. Very textual, very brooding. Maso pays his dues to the darker side of noise.

The newest release by Pennsylvania's **NAMANAX** entitled *Cascading Waves of Electronic Turbulence* is one of my personal picks of the litter. **NAMANAX** forge a sonic river of electric loops. On the first piece, "Contaminating Influence," gigantic floods of noise circulate in a rhythm that is immediately hypnotic.

**NAMANAX** have tapped into an ambiguous serenity buried somewhere in the procession of white noise. Coming in at 47 minutes and 7 seconds, "*Cascading Waves of Electronic Turbulence*" takes up the rest of the disc. This is an interesting self referential utility. The whirlpool remains but just in case you get a little sleepy in your fuzzy little hypnosis, electronic blasts of the quick and indefinable wake you up to the limits of stimulus. It's obvious that **NAMANAX** is not one of those noise bands who just want to shock and rebel from the world of structure. These guys have a mission.

**Marco Corbelli** is **ATRAX MORGUE** and it's

not real pretty. *Sickness Report* was recorded live and with no overdubs because, as Marco says, "I don't believe in perfection in art. The absolute perfection is death ..." The tracks on *Sickness Report* attest to Marco's ideology: "Slow Agony of A Dying Organism", "Brain Penetration", "Chronic Disease", et al. The noise is cold and unfamiliar, much like death is represented, and there are strong sensations of isolation. The goal here seems to be to reach for disturbance in one of its forms, play around with it a bit, then go for another. If you can enjoy them all and crave more, your sickness report comes back positive.

Speaking of a game of jump-n-jacks gone bad, **BRIGHTER DEATH NOW** gets the most morbid noise award this month! Congratulations. *Innerwar* slowly ascends from the ambient darkness of a calm murderous conscious to the bombastic certainty of recognition and premeditated activity. Unless you watch snuff films, **B.D.N.** comes off as twisted to the root, as well as just plain disgusting. If the concept of evil matches a real force in the universe, **B.D.N.** know of it. If we have no inherently 'pure', objective force of evil, **B.D.N.** have one for sale. Not for the squeamish or the sane.

**PICA** wraps up the Uneasy Listening series with their 11 track



release, *The Doctors Ate The Evidence*. Heavy on sampled loops that squeeze rationality out in little blobs, PICA make their way into the damnedest situations. Sometimes PICA are humorous, sometimes ethereal, and every now and then, dark and foreboding. These pieces are juxtaposed with a title given by the initial impression/intent of the artist, i.e. "The Time/Space Continuum" and "What's That Lassie, Timmy Fell Down the Mineshaft?!!??!" A vast array of noisy treats to ponder, giggle, and perplex.

**Mick Harris (Scorn)** has a new installment of **ULL** out called, *Continue Relapse/Release*). Consisting of one continuous track, *Continue* subtly gains deep, intermittent blasts of slow, naturally rhythmic low-end frequencies which underlie rich sonic reverberations that curiously enough, also seem to occur in a natural environment. The irony is: this natural basis is defined as a black ascension. An empathetic and passionate habitation with the unknown. With this whole sense of realism, I don't know where Harris fits in to it all. He has not made himself known in this work which adds an unharassed beauty to **ULL**'s multi-octave winds of sound. It also says a thing or two about the honesty of the artist. Unlike his other project, Scorn, Mick uses no beat in **ULL**, thereby freeing himself from the constraints of time. A very worthy experience.

Although I've never heard them up until now, I know that **CROCODILE SHOP** has been around for quite awhile. Band member Mick Hale writes the Danse Assembly column for Jbeat. Crocodile Shop are a techno/industrial trio who have all the modern tools at their service. By the second song of their latest CD, *Beneath (Metropolis)*, it's obvious that this outfit is successfully in tune with the same power utilized by KMFDM. A multi-faceted synthesis that doesn't reek of pretension like most others within the genre, C.S. manage to brand their own personal insignia on electronic music. Although there is an occasional abrasion that takes over the whole mix, the main focus is no doubt on the techno/dance aspect of the music. On the whole, Crocodile Shop are a lot more melodic and catchy than most of the technocratic noise makers today. Unlike a lot of techno/industrial bands, C.S. seem to have a feel for a good song before they translate it to its digital home.

**THE DIRTY THREE** are a guitar, percussion, and violin trio from across the big pond. *Horse Stories* (Touch and Go) is their second release and, I might add, a damned good one. TD3 solicit sublime melancholy, brash confrontation, and old fashioned sadness as a part of their emotional repertoire. I had a chance to see these guys live and it was as poignant as a funeral and as powerful as a bag of lazy street dust. The only thing that would have made the show better is if I could have eliminated all of the 15 year old radio lovers who were incessantly screaming for Beck. But that was only between songs. Once TD3 got started, I forgot all about them. They know how to milk all the options out of a destitute situation, leaving glitters of hope and memories strewn across the stage. *Horse Stories* is a 9-song double LP and I personally guarantee that it will set you adrift in a more tranquil world and/or turn you into an alcoholic.



Perhaps the most bone chilling piece of audio experimentation on the market right now is the new **Diamanda Galas** work of intriguing horror, *Schrei X Live* (Mute). If your not familiar with the works of Galas, try to imagine a bubonic plague infested theatre company. Galas' extreme vocal capabilities cover the shrill and spell binding, as well as the most decrepit of all monstrous screams. Galas is enthralling in the details of her horrific visions, but at other times she is less articulate and could pass as the cousin of Yoko Ono. *Schrei X Live* is the mind and voice of Galas, a few effects, and the texts from which she reads includes the book of Job, Thomas Aquinas, and originals. This is horror, this is deformity, this is being human to the bone.

**SPECTRUM** is a vintage equipment exposé concerning psychedelic studies, featuring none other than our man in the field,

**Sonic Boom. Songs for Owsley** (Reprise) is a 5 tune EP laden with beeps, blips, and descending ships. "The New Atlantis" sets primo psychedelia to Francis Bacon's mystical essay of 1624. Ear candy that Bacon would approve of I'm sure. **SPECTRUM** usually stays pretty ambient but as with all **Sonic Boom** affiliations, you definitely get some action that crawls up in your face. The instruments on this album are warm and unearthly. A direct hit.

**SPACE NEEDLE** (Zero Hour) have thrown out another two song single. "Panic Delaney" and "Outta My Face" both hold true to the low-fi style set by the synth heavy bishops of space land. Fuzzed out guitar and intense organ drippings make this one a keeper. They should be touring soon... I hope.

Just in time for the... um... holidays! **Pere Ubu** have a box set now available. *Datapanik in the Year Zero* (DGC) includes "Terminal Tower", "The Modern Dance", "Dub Housing", "New Picnic Time", "The Art of Walking", "Song of the Bailing Man", and a disc of Ubu rarities. Not sure of the price but I'll wager it's steep. Anybody want to buy me one?

That's a wrap for now. If you have any questions, complaints, or any experimental recordings that you would like to have reviewed in deconstruction, the address is: deconstruction, c/o Schedule One Productions, P.O. Box 2771 M.T.S.U., Murfreesboro, TN 37132 E-Mail: [drmatherly@prodigy.com](mailto:drmatherly@prodigy.com)

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In punk rock news...as I type this up, my school's radio station (Ithaca College - WICB) is playing a two-hour tribute of just Screeching Weasel stuff. And, as I'm sure most already know, November 5th marked the release date of "Bark Like A Dog", the latest album from Screeching Weasel. Yeah it's on Fat Wreck Chords. In my mind, what's the difference. Who cares what label puts it out?! The kids are gonna eat it up and Ben Weasel will be living in complete comfort and style in his new house that he can now afford once royalties start rolling in. Blah blah blah.

Enough already, I'm sure every zine in the world is gonna be blabbing about the new Screeching Weasel album as much as Green Day being on a major. Boo fucking hoo.

Note: The girl DJ from the radio station just announced herself as Kamala. Oh geez. Why is this bothering me so much? Perhaps one of the best things Screeching Weasel ever did was their first album. It was self titled and had like twenty somewhat songs all under 2 minutes. Great. Next best thing was *My Brian Hurts*. Oh well. This is just a waste of space.

In other punk related news, I've been very disappointed with the more recent issues of *Punk Planet* and *Maximumrocknroll*. I think there are a lot of new zines arising from all over the world by DIY kids who actually have TALENT. So be on the lookout and support punks who give it their all.

Ok a lot of bands have been putting new stuff out. First off, the Descendents new album is great. Yup. The first four tunes are so catchy, so twisted, so...Descendents. Quit whining about Epitaph being so big and go pick *Everything Sux* up at your local \$am Goody.

Next up are one of my personal favorites, The Queers. They've released yet another new full length on Lookout! Records. Everything these guys put out is rockin'. *Don't Back Down* offers a bunch of mellow surf like punk rock tunes along with Beach Boys covers, but it's done by those who do it best. It may not be as fast as some of their older stuff, but definitely check out the last tune with guest female vocalist accompanying Joe to form a sweet duet. I think Joe's laughing at how easy it is now to make shit loads of \$\$\$ for doing something so simple.

A little closer to home, NYC's GreenSleep have released their first s/t full length on Alone Records. Perfection comes to mind. Just ask Tim and Mollie over at Liquid Meat Records in San Diego, CA about this east coast band. So much energy and emotion in every heartfelt song. It's almost a cross between hardcore/emo and punk. Fast, then slow, but overall solid, tight, riffs with excellent drumming and vocals. Check it out!

By far the best thing I've heard since the last issue(and that's a long fucking time) is the new Propagandhi album. *Less Talk, More Rock* can very well be one of the best albums I own. Super melodic and at times catchy as heck punk tunes with biting political messages. In a nutshell, more of what's going on here needs to be going on here. Exposing all the much needed facts about our society. It's sad but true and Propagandhi are here to tell it to ya with full force anti-sexist, anti-corporate, anti-homophobic, and anti-racist profanity. The messages couldn't be conveyed any better than this kick in the face. Hell, they even include essays on racism, feminism, homophobia, and religion. Political activism right here. Learn more, participate, be heard. [Shameless Plug:] In the upcoming issue of Muddle Fanzine (yes, it's my zine fucko's) there's an excellent interview with Chris from Propagandhi. Everything you've ever wanted to know and more. It's inspiring. It's educating. It's Muddle issue number 10 out late December '96. Anyhow, John has left Propagandhi recently but no fret cuz Todd from I Spy has filled the slot and they've begun recorded and will be touring soon. So, it seems anarchist punks won't have to wait three fucking years for yet another new Propagandhi album.

Other shit worth getting a hold of are Against All Authority's full length on Far Out Records titled, "Destroy What Destroys You." It's pissed, fast ska/punk that is so anti-Big Brother, it'll make you wanna grab a gun and shoot your local congress member. Next, be on the lookout for a punk band called Dillinger Four. They define punk rock. So good. Oh yeah! Other bands, Discount, Vanbuilderass, The Crash, Ani DiFranco, Egghead, Mushuganas, and Imaginary Friends kick ass. Check em out. Quit whining about the scene and how mad you are at kids wearing Green Day shirts with blue hair. Go out and make something of your town. Support DIY bands and record labels. Sexist, racist, homophobes fuck off! Be an individual and think for yourself, not what's expected of you. Until next time...Keep it real. - Dave Thirsty (dbrown4@ic3.ithaca.edu)



BRENDA KAHN - *Destination Anywhere* (Shanachie) Kahn writes long essays about the seamier sides of life, love and sex, sets them to music which can be anything from near-acoustic spoken word to hard-driving rock to pure punk, and grabs the listener's ear and mind... and finally, his soul. A very enjoyable album, fun to listen to and cause for thought for those inclined that way. Kinda raunchy in places.

CAROLINE LAVELLE - *Spirit* (Warner Music U.K.) 10 songs written by Lavelle and one by Joni Mitchell. Caroline has a Mitchell-like sound, except it's larger and more diversified. The instrumentation provided by Caroline, producer William Orbit and a host of others, using keyboards and traditional instruments, is vastly enhanced by the excellent use of cellos and a wide variety of musical machines, some of which I've never heard of. (What the hell is a vibraphone?) A very intriguing and very effective mixture of Irish music, Big Band sound, classical and pop. The fact that Lavelle has a beautiful voice certainly doesn't hurt this release at all. I definitely hope to hear more from this lady!.

BILLY FREEZE - *Shelter* (Ikon Records) Former member of Life After Elvis, Philly's Freeze comes up with a bunch of songs which are, well, very close to new age country. Life and love; lost love and pain. It's a lousy, hurtin' world ... but sometimes there's a bit of sunshine showing through. Nothing new here, either in song content or quality. It's a good, well produced, albeit short (only 8 tracks and 30 minutes) CD. Fun and easy to listen to. I'll probably send it to a friend and forget about it the next day. But, hell ... the press release compares the guy to Bob Dylan and Bruce Hornsby and I would far sooner listen to him than to either of those vastly over-rated mediocre performers.

PLANETVILLE (Richard Bryant, 500 Gregory Ave, Weehawken NJ 07087) Hey, Jim, I didn't know you had Boxcar Willie's son for a neighbor! Richard does almost everything here, except that Joel Darelus plays acoustic bass on 9 of the 16 tracks on this album, as well as helping produce and record it at his studio in Rye, NY. Sister or wife Cheryl Bryant provides some nice photos for the sleeve. A not bad release, perfect for THE QUIET CORNER. Except that the lad sounds a hell of a lot like Boxcar Willie.

MICHAEL KOVACS - *Sacred* (Brimstone and Blue Productions, P.O. Box 481, South River NJ 08882) Although spoken word is seldom a product which will gain my attention, the centerpiece of this cd is definitely "Sacred," which is a multi-media production. On film shown during live performances, it is, on cd, a haunting 15 minute depiction of one girl's terrible journey through part of her life. Kovacs says that his guitar and his songs in music are central; the lovely cello artistry of Jilley Nagelberg and the excellent background vocals of Mary Ann Swider and his own vocal contributions are all merely accessories. I personally think the cello made this release. The guitar solos are good. Very emotional stuff; songs about life's traumas and heartbreaks. "Airmail," a story about friends across the sea, is a great performance by Jilley; cello and voice combined. Delightful. A marvelous aural experience, this cd.



late.

DAVID SANTANELLO - *Blood* (Attilio Music) Proof positive that titles mean nothing. Fully expecting one of those heavy metal things which the boss throws in occasionally to try to clear the cobwebs out of my head, I popped this into the player, turned the volume down a bit and prepared to be blasted. Guess what? The thing is pure "Quiet Corner" material. Pop ballads. There are a few riffs which one expects to find in a rock song but most of this 6 song release is acoustic or nearly so. Reminds me of John Denver and his non-electric guitar in a few places.

Rodney Leighton is on hiatus while he sells his house and looks for that little log cabin in the Canadian backwoods that he's always been talking about. In the meantime, send your acoustic, jangly, singer-songwriter stuff directly to Jersey Beat and we'll see Rodney gets it.

## DANSE ASSEMBLY (v#9.2)

[The exclamation points at the end of the reviews rate each release from ! to !!!!.]

### CHEMLAB Exile On Mainline (FCR)

Finally our favourite Lab-rats return with what is best described as Jared & Dylan's take on the whole Cybertec Records sound. This is a good thing. Heavy on the sequenced guitar samples, this is a perfect marriage between "Let Your Body Die"-type drive & some of that TKK groove. The extended dance mix has Jar's vox distorted to no end & it suits the mixx well. "JC Porno Star" is not quite as strong a track, with a syncopated backing with what sounds like ad-libs over the top. Still a fine showing & a teaser for the new full length cd, *East Side Militia* !!!!

### CON Lucky 13 (Object Records)

A strong debut, this. Con blend just enuff heavy elements with an accessible shine on top. Definitely electro to the core, it's a bit of a pop song structure here & there that helps raise it above all too many "scary" industrial acts that leave you wondering, ok... where's the song??? "Seen It All" even features a sort of New Wave-ish Devo bridge... this is a lot like Out Out used to be... Check it! !!!!

### CONTINUUM A Spider Records Comp (Spider)

From Toronto comes this comp of eerie & moody muzak. I must admit I hadn't heard of Spider before this & well, I was missing out. Like a baby-Projekt, it seems a close knit group of bands recording with each other & all sharing a strong gothic influence. My favourite is definitely the slow dark sounds made by Alchemy, who feature the excellent voice of Sue Hutton, who also appears on here in Rhea's Obsession. Thrive I also quite enjoyed with their Type-O-meets-the Waterlillies sound, heavy backing with air-y fem vox. Get this now!!!!

### ELECTRO-CUTION Various (Arts/Industria)

Leave it to Arts Industria, who used to bring us the best in graphix (w/ Arc Mag), to now skim the cream of the crop of industrial unknowns. I had heard of a lot of these fine acts yet never actually heard them! Bands like Assemblage 23, Rod Logic & Diode all show great potential with their creative use of electronics & minimal vox samples. Cult Of Jester (featuring RMI-er Ed Finkler, NOT Jester, much to my surprise!) is definitely the high point on here with pure electro backings & a vox track that recalls the heyday of WaxTrax, like Borgesia-TGT! A good overall comp with some real high points!!!

### EVIL'S TOY Morbid Mind (Metropolis)

I wasn't too into this Euro Electro act's previous two record as they were your typical mess of a band over-aping Skinny Puppy's style (could be why they ended up on this label however?) But that was then... Evil's Toy have really turned into a force to be reckoned with on *Morbid*...! "Dear God," the first single, is a heavy melodic trek through the eternal question. Accessible while retaining their original dark edge! Worthy !!!!

### FINAL .2. (Rawkus)

Another soundscape here, with punctuation marks as the 'song' titles! This one was so slo moving it actually sounded better scanning thru! Although I did dig the piano bit 1/2 way thru.

### FEKTION FEKLER From Here To Heaven (Pendragon Records)

You may remember this group from the Industrial Nation sampler. They're two brothers from Texas who go in for the heavy distortion on the voice (Skinny) & the goth tinged electro (Puppy) backings to a stunning effect! Although at times silly song titles take away from the dark vibe established here, they certainly put forth a demented psycho-horror of sound! Well worth your time & there's too many standout trax to bother mentioning, just buy this now! Pendragon sure knows how to pick 'em !!!!

### HAUJOBB Cleaned Visions (Metropolis)

Speaking of Pendragon, this is Haujobb's debut for the North American electro-monopoly Metropolis Records, after their first 3 on Penn... What an amazing track this is! Just "techno" enough for

this German duo to shed their over-Puppified previous incarnation & just "gloom" enuff to keep the old fans coming back for more. The Scope rmx is also outstanding, but if the extra track "Net Culture" is any indication of the full length (which is rumored to be "too trancey,") as well as an indication of things to come, we may have top move this band's future releases from the industrial bins over to the trance section, which isn't necessarily a bad thing! Looking forward to the full length. !!!!

### HALOMAKER Suffer This Wish (OutBurn)

Wow, what a groovy mix of WIRE loops with an almost Iggy Pop spoken twangy vox over the top on "In The Apart". With the distorted vocals & the heavy electronics & guitars this release manages to successfully cross over into a few different genres with out sounding contrived & like an attempt to "sell out." The 'feel' reminds me of RevCo's better days, but with a strong style of it's own. !!!!

### LAIBACH Jesus Christ Superstars (Mute)

They're Baaakk! Those crazy Sloveins, Laibach. With the deep vox & over-the-top dramatics still intact, they're off on some Religious trip this time out. I guess the techno sound of their last one was a "Flavor of the Month" fascination, as they're back to the "Life Is Life" styled arrangements with live drums & chugging guitars. "God Is God" is basically a rewrite of the previously mentioned "Life," but it seems a safe way to open up the album, then it's - you guessed it - "Jesus Christ Superstar," featuring the female backing vox that show up from time to time. Things go downhill on here for a while & after the total crap (ala metal-Krupps) "Declaration Of Freedom," it's uphill toward "Message From The Black Star" which, although Metal-overkill too, seems to work. It's just kind of sad to think that we've waited all this time for an album that could've worked even better as a three song Ep. It's not bad, but I just expected more from them !!



#### LOVE SPIRALS DOWNWARDS Ever (Projekt)

Why can't this brand of female-fronted "guitar" music be on MTV & not crap like Letters to Cleo & all that dribble? This is haunting, ethereal, acoustic-laden greatness. Simple melodies keep your attention & lush arrangements add to the melancholy of this fine release. A less gloom version of label-mates Black Tape For A Blue Girl, perhaps? !!!!

#### ULL Continue (RELEASE/RELAPSE)

A sixty-two minute soundscape from the demented mind of Scorn's Mick Harris. Audio wallpaper taken to the extreme, you really have to be in the right frame of mind for this one ... I'm afraid I wasn't. !

#### LYCIA Cold (Projekt)

One thing you can always count on with Projekt is their superb packaging. The new Lycia is no exception... a thick book with a layout as depressing-looking as their sound. This is meant as a compliment. A booming reverberated drum loop announces the start of the aptly titled "Cold," which sets the stage for the rest of this drone masterpiece. Vocals bounce back & forth from Male to Female chants in a fine methodical approach. Listen. !!!!

#### MORCHEEBA Who Can You Trust (China/Discovery)

With a laid back slo-groove (Portishead would kill for,) this cd surprised me for sure. I love her voice & the lounge-hip-hop backings are a sure winner, but the lyrics on "Moog Island" flat-out suck! Cheezy, to say the least. "Trigger Hippie" follows in much the same play-on-words vein & actually reminds me of Hoboken's own Tiny Lights (on a good day.) With it's awkward funky chug & silly vox. I want to like this but at times the 70's isms are a bit hard to take. "Tape Loop" make up for all the previous chunky words & if they can ride on this they show some promise here! !!!

#### SHINJUKU FILTH Junk (Fifth Column)

It's not until the 2nd track on here that you realize this is the excellent act off of FCR's last two Full Contact comps. Fast break-beats that cut down to 1/2 time with some spoken words. Almost like He Said, with that groovy backbeat & 'questioning' vocal. "Urashima Taro" fools you, thinking it'll be drum & bass, yet never delivers the goods. Tribal cut "Bridge" & the Techno-hell of "The Junk" follow, keeping up the experimental edge of this fine cd. !!!!

#### SIGNAL AOUT 42 Immortal Collection 83-95(Fifth Column/Out Of Line)

It's not hard to see why FCR had the sense to license this hard-body music act from Germany's Out Of Line records. Even if the sticker on this is a bit overdone, it's a good 'reference point' as this is a definite must own for all fans of early 242. Tracks like "WaterDome" & "To Talk Nonsense" make you wonder why you weren't listening to this band years ago. I for one feel as though I've missed out on SA42's innovations for far too long... It is my duty to demand that all electro-enthusiasts BUY THIS IMMEDIATELY!!!!+!!!

#### TACTILE Inscape (Rawkus)

This is definitely the best of the 'soundscapes' cds I've gotten this month. (I wonder, is this genre growing or am I just on more mailing lists now?) Tactile at least vary the sound-banks they use a bit & play with the stereo field to evoke a more "trippy" experience, which always helps! "Envoi" is the cd's climax & high point with space-age sound-bursts & bleeps galore. This I'll come back to again & again. !!!!

#### THINK TANK Skullbuggery (Hakatak)

Ever wonder what happened to that excellent synth-pop group Information Society? Well I did & my prayers were answered when this cd from Think Tank arrived in the post. Think Tank features Paul Robb, the "brains" behind InfoSoc & this well produced electro is his newest musical outlet, so to speak. Lead off trac "Hack 2" picks up where the "Peace & Love" harder sound inSoc was going for left off at. While "The Screen" (the 1st single) goes in for more of an Ambient/house feel. It'd be tempting to forget that Paul Robb helped to create this "sound" when comparing certain tracks to bands like EBN & Consolidated, but the looped spoken word samples of "Unreal Politik" quickly reminds us how the originator is the master, Kudos Paul!!!!

**LABELS:** Continue to send all electro-teknico-industrial product directly to us at DANSE ASSEMBLY MUSIC NETWORK, 5 Franklin Blvd., Somerset, NJ 08873 \*\*If you like this column, check out our bi-monthly mag DAMN! send \$1 to cover postage!\*\* Email [damnet@aol.com](mailto:damnet@aol.com)

## LAIBACH



6L6 (PO Box 35376 Brighton, Mass. 02135) Why this band has not been signed yet is beyond me. This extremely tight Boston-area band churns out head spinning, intelligent powerful music that defines labels. Some punk influences here, certainly, but these songs are not generic three chord pieces of chump change. Instead, 6L6 places three inspired tracks on this demo, heavy on vocal effects and unique musicianship creating a huge sound. I really hope somebody out there picks these guys up. - Rich Q.

THE ACID BUM TRIO - "The Fastest Band On Earth..." (Charlie C., 4801 Tonnelle Ave., North Bergen NJ 07047) Like it says, these guys play fast, stop on a dime, yell something out in unison, and then take off into hyperdrive again. "Speednoise-metalcore," it says on the cover, and I can't say it any better. - Jim T.

AVISO 'HARA - "The Claude Coleman Stony Brook Sessions" (Thumbox, PO Box 154, New Brunswick NJ 08903) The inimitable Dave Urbano adds his hypermelodic bass runs to this promising New Brunswick noiseroock combo, who recorded these tracks at Ween drummer Claude Coleman's studio. I especially like the vocals, which range from sweetly melodic to a throaty roar, there's lots of crazy guitar skronk, and the cover of Prince's "Raspberry Beret" adds a nice touch of unexpected whimsy. Check 'em out. - Jim T.

BBS PARANOICOS - *Fabricas Magicas... Lapidas Tetricas* (TOXIC, P.O.Box 259-22, Santiago, Chile) Well, I'm just glad that I speak Portuguese fluently, or I would've been FUCKED! All I got was a tape with nothing else. It's a full-length album, but everything's in Spanish, so I was kinda lost at first. It's basic Punk, fast drums and guitars, lowtone vocals, nothing really special. All the songs have the same focus, it sounds like the same song over and over. - Phil P.

BLANK (707 Bunnecke St. Baltimore, MD 21211) They're from Baltimore, and they rock. Blank takes bumpy Jawbreaker emo-punk and sets it to fierce Quicksand-like guitar experimentation. These seven songs explode with nifty riffs and time changes, but they keep

it all under control; there's a lot happening in each song, but it never sounds like too much. This stuff belongs on CD. - Jim T.

BLAZE CAMO (No address given) This is Jesse Jones of Yuppicide's new band, and if you've ever heard Yuppicide, you'll know what to expect - Jesse's formidable snarling vox over metallish Hardcore guitars. - Jim T.

BLOODY SODS - "Don't Wanna Be" (3150 E.Hwy.34 #246, Newnan, Ga. 30265) Somewhere between generic hard rock and listless



punk rock, there is a place just full of bands like this. The entire demo is brimming with boring riffs, pointless lyrics and every hardcore cliche imaginable. There is the famous "click the drum sticks four times then start the song" routine, obligatory mosh parts, and even an Oi! chant during the opening track. I have to respect their effort, and they seem very serious about what they are doing, taking their cues from a Chaos U.K. style swagger. But what is with the British accent from a Georgia band? Time to get back in the garage and carve out some originality. - Rich Q.



Aviso 'Hara

CBC (Corn Beef & Cabbage) - This young No. Jersey combo kicks things off with "Free," a blast of Rancid-style punk, all sloppy vocals and loud guitars, with an exuberantly catchy, anthemic chorus. "POV" begins with a threatening bass line and a tribal drum beat, erupting into a hard 'n' heavy mosher, with angrily shouted vox and clangy metal riffs. They do the Punk and Hardcore thing equally well; only time will tell if they choose one direction over the other, but I'd like to be around to find out. - Jim T.

CHARLIES FAMILY CRISIS (Ginger Elvis Mgmt., 45 Shakespeare Ave., Cefn Glas, Bridgend, Wales, CF31 4RY U.K.) Given how many American bands bend over backwards trying to sound British, it's a hoot to hear this Welsh quintet try to parrot early Eighties SoCal hardcore. Dead Kennedys and Circle Jerks influences abound, and there's a D.O.A. cover to boot. These guys obviously have the passion, although there's nothing on this 6-song tape that rises above the level of generic. - Jim T.

DEGENERICS - "The Fantastic Four EP" (48 Avenue J, Jamesburg NJ 08831) Hardcore ska? All I can say is, YES! Bug-eyed vocals, bouncy surf 'n' spy music bass lines, and thrash guitars provide an adrenaline rush that will have you skanking your brains out. - Jim T.

HATECHOIR - "It Only Hurts The First Time" (Loco Diablo Prod's, PO Box 332, Thomasboro IL 61878) "Industrial Hardcore," it says on the sleeve, and so it is: three blasts of heavy, grinding guitars, guttural vox, and sampled effects (I like the little typewriter bell that keeps dinging at the end of riffs.) The lyrics are strictly dumb-core though - songs about watching TV and being a fuckup ("I went to work drunk as fuck/my breath smelled bad and my eyes were shut"). - Jim T.

HIP RIPPER (89-40 239 Street, Belleroose NY 11426) Two songs, both with a rootsy American drawl. "Crawling Around" is a bit dated and a bit too rootsy for my tastes, verging on bar-band rock. The far feistier "Natural Disaster" has an angry edge that, while still dated a bit, at least harks back to something I liked - vintage "Angry Young Man" pre-punk ala' Graham Parker or Elvis Costello. - Jim T.

JERUNGDU - "Demo III" (Michael Donohue, 1176 Seminary Ave, St Paul MN 55104) There aren't many generalizations you can make about a band when every song on a demo tape sounds different. The only thread running through these five tracks is a wacky sense of humor and excellent production. "Purple Helmet" is sort of a Pansy Division parody about why "certain" guys love football, "A Man Fell In Love With John Today" tells the story of a guy who goes to a bar and gets the hots for a transvestite, then has to tell his pals he knew all along... Both of those tracks are robust rock of no definable genre. The remaining three tracks aren't as out-and-out goofy, but still go off on weird tangents (jazz, punk, noise) that might best be described as a post-modern Mothers Of Invention. Ambitious, weird, funny... God, I wonder what they're like live? - Jim T.

KIDS INC. (Tim, 818 Defense Dr., Marlton NJ 08053) Catchy pop punk with singalong choruses and cool backup harmonies, and lyrics that capture the social hell known as high school. With song titles like "Cool (Why We're Not)," "So What?" and "Your Name Here," these young'uns obviously have a better grasp of irony than Alanis Morissette, and with their arsenal of catchy riffs, they might just grow up to be the next Green Day. Inspirational verse: "I wonder why it's never me, it's always guys in No Fear hats and Stussy shirts, I can't explain why all these girls are with all these clones, and yet I sit here, still alone, 'cause I refuse to bow to social fascism." - Jim T.

KILL YOUR IDOLS - "Live At CBGB" (286 Parkside Ct., Copiague NY 11726, \$2) Despite borrowing their name from an early Sonic Youth EP, Kill Your Idols are strictly old school New York Hardcore - angry, aggressive, mosh music. It's a genre that hasn't really progressed since Agnostic Front invented it 13 years ago, but if in-your-face, clench-jawed hardcore is your cup of testosterone, be my guest. The quality of this live-soundboard tape from CBGB is excellent. - Jim T.

LAST TRAIN OUT (Contact lastttrain@aol.com) Bluesy rock tuneage about heavy drinkin' and bad wimmin. Bon Jovi fans might like it, but then, do Bon Jovi fans read this zine? (God, I hope not.) - Jim T.

MOTHERMANIA (731 Rosefeld Ave., Ocean NJ 07712) Between Kid With Man Head and these kids, the Jersey Shore may just wind up the Pop/Punk Capital of the Universe. This high-school aged trio specializes in ska-flavored punk, with really clever lyrics. On this demo, they poke fun at "Talk Shows" (and the braindead zombies who watch them,) sing about the pain of constipation ("No Shit,") the shame of wearing a "Temporary Tattoo," and tell the tale of a lottery winner on "White Boy." Catchy, funny, (and on the middle two tracks, quite Screeching Weaselish,) Mothermania have a big future

in store for them, if they can just make it through 11th Grade. - Jim T.

THE NERVE - (1524 E 31<sup>st</sup> St. Brooklyn NY 11234) If I only had a nice meatball sandwich, I'd know what to do with all this cheese. Bad Company fans will eat this up. Me, I'd rather have the meatball



### BBS Paranoicos

sandwich. - Jim T.

PRETTY POLLY - "Reject" (PO Box 305, Lawrence NY 11554, \$3)

One of those rare bands that comfortably straddles metal and alt.rock, Pretty Polly blends elements of hard rock, hardcore, and funk; a little Monster Magnet, a little Faith No More, and some Alice In Chains on this 6-song demo. Yes, it's heavy, but not without bits of pop melody floating through the sludgy sonic stew of guitars, bass, and drums. And happily, unlike a lot of sludge, this rocks. Neat picture sleeve on the tape, too. - Jim T.

REGAL BEAGLE / GALAXY BEE - Split Demo (Galactic Beagle Records, Box 3888, Montebello CA 90640) Gotta love Regal Beagle - four kids who all changed their last names to Beagle (Bryan Beagle, Alan Beagle, Derek Beagle, Alben Beagle) churning out garagey pop-punk. Screeching Weasel influences abound, from the snotty vocals to the silly song titles ("Banana Syndrome," "Stinker") to the faux Ramones pop songs ("I Wanna Be Different") to the catchy little riffs that buzz through the tunes. Galaxy Bee's three songs offer more diversity: A Quicksand-ish emo rocker with tempo changes and shifting dynamics, a poppier number, and a ballad spiced with some twangy surf guitar. Both bands get extra punk points for recording live in a garage on a home recorder. - Jim T.

SAY UNCLE! - "Red Lining The Fun Meter" (PO Box 2465, Times Sq. Sta., NYC 10108) Power pop is definitely making a comeback in Fun City and these guys have all the right moves - smiley-faced boy-next-door vocals, chirpy guitars (acoustic & electric for that nice jangly mix,) catchy tunes, and simple lyrics about chasing girls. The garagey keyboards on "Pieces" add a nice touch. This will either stick a smile on your puss or have you putting your fist through the wall, depending on your tolerance for sweets. Me, I smiled. - Jim T.

SCARAB (ESP Mgmt., 888 7th Ave #2904, NYC 10106) Standard alt.rock here - quiet verses, loud choruses, anthemic guitars, this time with wispy female vox. "Wake With You" is a mid-tempo love song with old-fashioned lyrics ("and sometimes I love you more than I can handle...") but I did like the way the band hammers home the last chorus. "Eggshells," with its shoegazer tempo and soaring romantic bridge, sounds a bit British, possibly because most Ameri-

can girls just don't belt out love songs anymore with a dollop of irony or invective. "Bloom" repeats the same formula even a little grander; Cranberries, anyone? - Jim T.

**SHYSTER** - No info on the cassette, no song titles, and no tape sleeve. C'mon kids, how many times do we have to go through this? This could just as well be a blank tape for all the good it's going to do this band. And it's a pity. Shyster's speedy punk tunes serve up a nice blast of adrenalized popcore, heavy on the Jawbreaker and Screeching Weasel influences but lots of fun. Lesson for today: Doing a half-assed job of packaging your music isn't "punk," it's just... well, half-assed. - Jim T.

**SICK** - *Four Letter Words* (Skyline Media, P.O.Box 316513, Chicago, IL 60631-06513) "Sick", "Fuck", "Life", "Pain". Those are the songs. Total fuckin' audio brutality. The vocals are insane. There's 3 guys. The bassist and guitarist both sing, and they hired a session drummer who's incredibly fast! They mix a lot of styles ranging from thrash to hardcore to death. The final result or outcome is a fuckin' insanely heavy 4-song demo that'll blow you away! Anyone into any kind of heavy or aggressive music, hook up. - Phil P.

**SPOOGE** - "Nice And Warm" (1082 Frances Dr, Valley Stream NY 11580) Quirky Zappa-esque jazzoid punk with silly song titles and wacky vocals. There's a junkie lament called "Savannah Cobain" and "Imp Of The Perverse" has a funny Bill Cosby sample. High points for ambition and execution, although it was a little too oddball for my tastes, in the way that I always liked the *idea* of the Mothers Of The Invention but never really enjoyed listening to them. - Jim T.

**SUPERTHRIVE** - "Live at CBGBs" (No address given) Picture yourself driving home early one morning - there's nothing on the radio, all the alternative stations are off the air, and the only choices

are Hootie & the Blowfish or the hard rock station. Much like the hard rock station (where this belongs,) this tape will keep you awake and it's ok for a song or two, but you can't wait to get back to listening to something better.. - Tom B.

**SURAN SONG IN STAG** (223 Livingston Ave., 1st Floor, New Brunswick NJ 08901) You hear another female singer almost every day, but it's a rare and happy occasion when you discover a new voice. Suran Song has a voice that could melt steel (or the stoniest man's heart,) the kind of voice that breathes life and emotion into even the most pedestrian lyrics. She is ably accompanied by a talented ensemble that includes the ubiquitous Dave Urbano on strummy rhythm guitar, Bill Weis on extra-melodic bass, and Jason Reynolds on drums. Live, they embellish the already-beguiling music with a psychedelic multi-media onslaught that includes slides and video. Amazing. This album-length cassette was produced by Ween's Claude Coleman at his Stony Brook studio. New Brunswick's renaissance continues with yet another original and talented band added to an already overheated scene. - Jim T.

**VAPORHEAD** - "Blissfully Ignorant" (Rupon Management) Modern-rock Generica. If you switched the singer of this band with the singer from the Counting Crows, you'd think this is a new record from the Counting Crows - that's how faceless this is. Just when you think there isn't anymore room on the bandwagon, another forgettable group hops on. People will should remain blissfully ignorant of Vaporhead. - Michael C.

**THE VIOLETS** 4 song cassette - The #2 song, 'Oh Maria,' sounds like a single to me. I'm afraid I don't know a thing about this outfit other than that they sound very good; the singer, whoever she is, has a helluva voice, very similar to Melissa Etheridge, except possibly stronger. I've been playing this tape over and over and wishing it were a double length CD. - Rodney L.



# Muddle fanzine

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# Record Reviews

22 JACKS - *Uncle Bob* (Dummy Recordings, 6201 Sunset Blvd #211, Hollywood CA 90028) I'm not fond of the Cali punk thing and after this effort by noted Cali band members (ex-Wax, Adolescents, Face To Face, and No Use For A Name,) it definitely does not carry me off on a surfboard and make me put on baggies and write for Maximum Rock N Roll. I guess it's the New Yorker in me. - Rich H.

AFTERIMAGE - *Ghostlight* (Strategic Records, PO Box 361281, Los Angeles, CA 90036) This is really bland "light rock," such as you might hear on one of those bland commercial radio stations that play only that style of music. It seems to have a slight soul influence (very slight), and little energy. It's pretty insipid, to tell you the truth. - Paul S.

AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY - *Destroy What Destroys You* (Far Out Records) - Fighting big brother to the very bone. Ripping away at society in a ska punk form that is essential. You can not resist anymore. Here's the answer. "I never do what I'm told, I'm a time bomb waiting to explode." Definitely in the top five of the year. - Dave T.

THE ALMIGHTY - *Just Add Life* (Raw Power) I won't even open this review with a cheap shot about the album's title. Nope. Instead, I'll bring it to your attention that the singer of this band, who kinda sounds like a cross between the guy from the Bosstones and Tim from Rancid, seems bent on throwing vaguely proletarian slogans like "Can't fight the power when you don't have the power to fight" around over a musical soundtrack that would fit right in on one of those FM stations that think it's daring to play the Goo Goo Dolls during drive time. My copy of this CD came with a "bonus" live CD, proving that the old Dennis Miller axiom is right on: two of shit is shit. - Mike F.

THE AMERICAN ANALOG SET - *The Fun of Watching Fireworks* (Emperor Jones/Trance) A little cleaner than Flying Saucer Attack, a little less poppy than Stereolab. This bandwagon is full. Run ahead and jump on the next one. Please. - Shawn S.

ARCHERS OF LOAF - *All The Nations Airports* (Alias/Elektra) It's that Chapel Hill style of melodic noise, but nobody - not even the progenitors of the genre, Superchunk - does it any better. The vocals can get a little annoying, but once those guitars kick in, it's distortion-pedal heaven. Crank it up. - Jim T.

THE ASSORTED JELLY BEANS (Kung Fu Records, PO Box 3061, Seal Beach CA 90740) Riverside, CA, as the bio states, "It's more than just speed labs and pit bull farms - its Ska-Core". This is decent for this style. I liked it for a few tracks, especially "Brain Dead," but the meshing of the two styles gets on my nerves on a full length. Good for fans of this hybrid. - Tom B.

BABY GOPAL (Victory Records, PO Box 146546, Chicago IL 60614) This is a surprising release considering the history of Victory. If they are using this band as their first step in a new direction, it's a great place to start. Baby Gopal features passionate female vocals over the top of heavyish guitar crunch with enough pop sensibility to keep it fresh. The band has variations on its sound ranging from ear candy pop jangle, to aggressive, melodic efforts. The majority of these disc is easy to love, and it reminded me slightly of bands like Hazel. Cheers to Victory for signing this great band. - Rich Q.

BAD BRAINS - *Black Dots* (Caroline) Primo vintage '79 Bad Brains back when they were setting the U.S. HC standard alongside Black Flag and Minor Threat. Lightning fast, pinpoint accurate. This is before the reggae really kicked in, before the with-or-without HR debacles, before they came

out against "blowing bubbles." In other words, it's the motherfucking shit. Bootlegish sound but perhaps a indispensable document of a band doing it DIY-style in a time of disco fallout and arena pretensions (not even factoring in the equation of them being an all black punk rock outfit with megadeads) and transcending it all with a sublime rage and precision. - Des Jr.

BARKMARKET - *L Ron* (American Recordings) I listened to this several times and was never too impressed. Then, one day during a bout of sleep deprivation, I put it on and it seemed to make better sense. Cross Pussy Galore's discombobulation with Ministry's harsh but precise production values and you might get an idea of Barkmarket's monolithic blues reversals. That part of it is Alright, but the singer and the pretentious words he is mouthing have got to go! - Des Jr.

BEDHEAD - *Beheaded* (Trance Syndicate, P.O. Box 49771, Austin, TX 78765) Bedhead are back with a full length LP. Beheaded is guaranteed to either send you hurling into a narcoleptic stupor or support the campaign in favor of your suicide. With three guitarists that seem to know the power of the great nod, Bedhead weave a slow-motion dream so ethereal that it leaves the Cowboy Junkies as a fitting choice for Metal Blade Records. Lyrically, Bedhead present an existential view closely related to the feeling you get when you sacrifice sleep in order to read Nietzsche's Madman for the 12th time. It's too late. All that awaits you is death. Put in the new Bedhead and see what happens. - Greg M.

BRENDAN BENSON - *One Mississippi* (Virgin) A baker's dozen of primarily pop song love ditties. "Sittin' Pretty" is perhaps the best song and is a real conflict for me: it is a paean to a girl with short hair, which is something I hate, and so I face the conflict of praising a song promoting a practice I abhor. Other than that, nothing grabbed my attention. Perfectly good songs, sung fairly well and with good instrumentation. But it seems I've heard this a hundred times. Is this a sign that I am getting burned out? Or just that a lot of releases are very similar? - Rodney L.

BETTY'S LOVE CHILD - *Angelfish* (17th St. Records, 797 E. St. John St. San Jose CA 95112) Cross Face to Face with Screeching Weasel and you've got a pretty good idea what this band is all about. There's nothing altogether new or innovative about this record, but, at the very least, they piecekd bands that I like to rip off. - Mike F.

MARTIN BISI - *Dear Papa, I'm In Jail* (New Alliance, POBox 1389, Lawndale, CA 90260) Weird, driftly, offhand, boring. - Des Jr.

BISON - *Space Evader* (Cosmic Records, P.O. Box 382391, Cambridge, MA, 02238) There seems to be some kind of sci-fi rock spinning off of the modern rock block. If this sub-genre thrives, Bison may be regarded as one of its better creative forces. The lyrics touch on some neat escapist themes, and the bassist sounds like a big Rush fan, but they can't seem to shake that modern rock sound. What they need to do is push the envelope a little more. Bison sounds like they want to take our ears someplace off the beaten path, and that alone makes them worth a listen. - Michael C.

BLESSED ETHEL - *Welcome to the Rodeo* (Big Pop) Amerindie Big Pop seems to have a knack for finding truly wonderful alternative pop bands, lately from the UK as is the case with B.E. They've been in the British top ten indie charts and even allowing that, they are far from sucking. A fine blend of 60s mod melodies influenced by B movies and packing a definite attitude all leads to making them today's new wave quality offering. Sara Doran's vocals prove that demented can be beautiful. - Tom B.

BLINKER THE STAR - *A Bourgeois Kitten* (A&M) Some of the songs have a free and breezy feel, some have a cinematic quality. Some jangle, some

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bounce. This is quite listenable, and while it isn't the most unique disc in the world, it sure doesn't sound like yet another Pearl Jam clone. This is a band to watch for, as they have a good sound that should take them somewhere. - Paul S.

**BLITZ** - *Voice of a Generation* (Dojo Records, FDR Station, POB 684, NY, NY 10150) Yet still another release of nostalgia - this one definitely stands the test of time, even 15 years later. These purveyors of early 80s UK street punk brought us such awesome hits as "Time Bomb," "Voice of a Generation" and "Someone's Gonna Die Tonight." This CD also contains bonus tracks from the Carry On Oi compilations and a demo. It's not new, but this sets a benchmark for the genre. Damn good shit - get this. - Tom B.

**BLOCK** - *Lead Me Not Into Penn Station* (Burning Bush Records, 167 Madison Ave., Ste. 501, NYC, 10016) Folk meets hip hop meets retro rock. Block is street poetry ("Hard") over solid guitar playing ("Street Gig") occasionally accompanied by dance beats ("Reuben Says"). The music is above average, but the lyrical imagery soars - in-your-face honesty that hooks and reels you in. If you hunger for something much deeper than the usual fluff of radioland, Block's a filling meal. - Michael C.

**BLUE** (Fretless Music, 108-22 Queens Blvd., Suite #226, Forest Hills, NY 11375) Blue remind me of a lot of "alternative" one-hit wonder acts that have been popping up on AOR radio within the last few years. You can tell the majority of it is highly contrived; on the *Blue* album we get lots of little hints at something different - but not enough to be at all interesting. Imagine boring, pop tunes without harmony and absolutely no time changes (god forbid.) Sometimes the vocals are plugged into a distortion pedal, other times they're over-produced. Sound familiar? Blue obviously doesn't have the balls to try something really original - hopefully we won't be seeing this on MTV within the year. - Dan E.

**BOBA FETT YOUTH** (Bucky, PO Box 72671, Las Vegas NV 89170) Uh, um, I love *Star Wars*...and, um... I love hardcore... but I don't like this. Cool name, though. - Rich H.

**BODYJAR** - *Rimshot!* (Revelation Records) - They're supposed to be the hardcore punk band of Australia and even do chugga chugga stuff, but... something's missing. I think it's just not good. Yeah, it's missing the fact that this is terrible. Oh well. - Dave T.

**BOILERMAKER** - *In Wallace's Shadow* (Goldenrod, 3770 Tansy St., San Diego, CA92121) Boilermaker are a San Diego band of the Drive Like Jehu-influenced variety, though they're a slight bit mellower than Jehu. I guess they're probably classified as an emo band. But whatever they are, I like it. I liked their last CD and I like this one. Soothing at times, heavy and powerful at others; sort of like Boy's Life with better vocals. Best cut: the harmony-laden "Slow Down." - Jon C.

**BOREDOMS** - *Super Roots 6* (Reprise) Another confounding release from the ever prolific Boredoms. This time Mr. Eye and Co. drop into a more tranced out and perhaps pastoral mode. None of the trademark "my dicks in a mousetrap!" vocal histrionics; in fact, I don't think there are any vocals contained. The tracks are long and soundscapic and beyond description. In fact, one cut (track 2 labeled "O(xl2)") sounds like amp buzz turned way down. Another track is ■ 8 minute drum roll. Very strange but also somehow quite groovy. It's as if a mid 70's Enos produced a mid 80's Sonic Youth side project thing. I dunno, but I like it. - Des Jr.

**BOX OF CHOCOLATES** - *Fearful Symmetry* Vinyl LP (Mad Entropic Carnival, RD1 Box 1209, Plainfield VT 05667) This 1990 release features Will Oldham, pre-Palace, and is of some historical interest, since it arguably chronicles the birth of the lo-fi movement. The live-on-a-boombox ambience, the sloppy backup vocals, and the loose arrangements sound like a bunch of pals recording a basement demo tape, which is what this was originally - Oldham gave the first version away as a Christmas present to a small circle of friends. Palace Brothers fans might dig it as an early artifact of what was to come, but it sounds too raw and unfinished to stand up to much more scrutiny than that. - Jim T.

**BOYS LIFE** - *Departures and Landfalls* (Headhunter / Cargo) Boys Life has shifted to a smoother, more flowing style, in comparison to their self-titled full length of 1995. In that release they showed a heavy midwestern emo style, full of stops and starts, loads of dynamic and tempo changes, and angst-filled vocals. This album flows more evenly, but loses none of the power and emotion. There's more melody, but still tinges of angst. Kinda post-emo, if you will. Excellent stuff. - Paul S.

**BILLY BRAGG** - *William Blake* (Elektra) Although I've always hated leftists and socialists, there's something I've found appealing about Bragg's music,

hit several years ago. This album, his first since 1991, is more subdued (he even uses a Rudyard Kipling poem) Maybe his becoming a dad has mellowed him out. Horns, a ska tune, gospel sounds, etc. One of his songs (*Brickbat*) includes this line "I'd rather be listening to sea shell sounds with baby instead of planting bombs." Ahh, maturity. - Tom B.

**BRAID** - *The Age of Octeen* (Mud Records, 905 S. Lynn St., Urbana IL 61801-5205) This music just drips with honest emotion. Being midwestern emo, it has a high melodic content - no screaming noise, here. The music ranges from quiet and somewhat minimalist, to epic rage, from smooth, beautiful, pop-like music, to post-hardcore edged stuff. On some of the songs, particularly "Harrison Ford," there's hints of Gauge influence (one of the progenitors of the midwestern emo genre). Just as the music is intense and beautiful and honest, the musical skills of the band members don't disappoint. This band is tight and skillful. And the production quality of this album is very high. All of the instruments and vocals are not only audible and balanced, but clear and sharp. Pure and simple, this is a must have album for all music lovers. - Paul S.

**BRAIN BATS** - *Curse of the Brain Bats* (Cyclone Records, 24 Pheasant Run, Merrimack, NH 03054) They look like punks, but it's actually rockabilly, or as they prefer to bill themselves, "psychobilly." The sound encompasses elements of mod, surf & punk - all backed with reverb and steady drums. Not exactly my choice of styles, but if you're into the Cramps or Stray Cats, you'd probably like this. - Tom B.

**BRAINSICK** - *Knuckle Sandwich* (Ransom Note Records, PO Box 40164 Bellvue, Wa. 98015) Brainsick plays fast, sometimes out of control punk that rants and raves about ignorance and general daily frustrations for nineteen blink-and-they're-over songs. They are certainly not creating anything new, but for what it is worth, the disc is pretty strong. The vocals are so fast they are nearly unintelligible, but the music whirling around them help to make up for that fact. Brainsick are able to capture an abrasive 80's hardcore feel without making their sound dated or corny. It takes *Knuckle Sandwich* about five songs before it really warms up, but then the rest of the record smokes. Nothing very complex, but you'll dig it. - Rich Q.

**THE BREETLES** - *Spoof* (Shuss Systems, ■ Elm St., Oakland NJ 07436) "The Breetles" is in fact a South Jersey studio whiz named Chris Breetveld, who wrote, performed, and produced this entire LP of Beatlesque pop. Tweecore fans will be drooling; it's the best Beatles pastiche I've heard since the Rutles. - Jim T.

**BROKEN** - *Defy The Season* (Standfast, PO Box 973, Lilburn GA 30226) I'm not into the sXe thing as far as a lifestyle but I'm totally into the musical side of it. This is an emotionally driven band. Awesome. This fits right into the old Slamdeck label and the newer Initial label brand of straightedge hardcore. Kickass! - Rich H.

**BROTHER'S KEEPER** - *The Continuum* (Trustkill, 23 Farm Edge Ln. Tinton Falls, NJ 07724) I really dig some of the weird freaked-out guitar sounds these guys come up with, I just can't take the vocals, they kill it for me. These guys should do what Iceburn did, get rid of the singer and go instrumental. I don't care, give the guy an instrument just don't let him sing anymore. Seriously think about it guys. - Rick K.

**BRUTAL TRUTH** - *Kill Trend Suicide* (Relapse Records- POBox 251 Millersville, PA 17551) Better than average grindcore that, for the most part, manages to avoid chukka-chukka metaloid cliches. I rather like it, especially that track where the voice guy repeatedly screams "I killed my family!" - Des Jr.

**THE BUTTERFLIES OF LOVE** - *America's Newest Hit Makers* (Coffeehouse Records, 510 Main St., Middletown CT 06457) The Butterflies of Love are America's Newest Time Wasters. A handful of guitar riffs played repeatedly can be done in an interesting way. Unfortunately, these guys haven't found that out yet. As if being beaten to death with the same wanna-be blues isn't enough, the lyrics have so little to say that they too must be repeated over and over again. Yeah, the guitar and the husky vocals sound good, but there's really nothing up their sleeves. After five seconds, these bad magicians are out of rabbits, the hat is empty, and the audience is asleep. - Michael C.

**BUZZKILL** - *Up* (Alternative Tentacles) I think I was the third person on my block to hear this Cd even before it had a test pressing. I won't disclose my sources. (D-kil . . D-kill . . . D-kill . . . who said that?) But it involved driving around from bar to bar while said unknown bass player cranked it in between stops. The first try, when I tried to play the Buzzkill Cd UP on my own, my ashamed Cd player skipped like techno music. Desperate, I jammed the mother fucker in my computer and whala! the most annoying

sounds of our time leaped out and beat me right down. Buzzkill (not the TV show) brought me right down to the nicotine den of the Court Tavern and filled my lungs with smoke without having to leave my seat at home. My favorite tracks, out of 22, are: "Volvo", "Me", "Bob", "In the woods" (sounds like a Chili Pepper title) and "Better This Way". These guys are like the Motorhead of punk rock-n-roll! A lot of the songs could have been scrapped for the dogs of the truly annoying, but this way you can bounce back and forth from the kitchen with a fresh beer and not miss a beat, because these guys are the short order cooks of what I think real punk bar bands are really about. You know, at times they have the ability to give you that chummy feeling you get when you sing along all the slurred words with the drunk next to you. - Dave U.

**BY THE GRACE OF GOD (Victory)** No Indie rock here, but probably the best thing Victory has released this year. Ex-Endpoint and Falling Forward folk come up with a classic hardcore sound that immediately brings to mind Verbal Assault, a sound that is sorely missed by these ears. Variable tempos and diverse songwriting with essays on the band's history and intentions. Excellent! Haven't seen them live but I've heard they're great. - John L.

**CALLIOPE - I Can See You With My Eyes Closed** (Thick Records, 1013 W. Webster #7, Chicago, IL 60614-3537) Super mellow pop harmonies with a splash of jazz flavor here and there. Vocalist J. Andy Dryer usually comes off sounding like Jeff Buckley or Tarence Trent D'Arby (minus the vast reservoir of soul). The horns, along with the other wind instruments played by Dryer, are responsible for granting Calliope their power over mood. "With The Exception Of El Sol" and "Homo Sapien" could easily belong in a David Lynch scene of a most undefinable transaction. Very talented and hypnotic but after a full listen to *I Can See You With My Eyes Closed*, that fine line between great song writing and background music appears to be a great big blur. - Greg M.

**CANDY SNATCHERS** (Safe House) Not ready for radio friendly airplay - these VA punks are captured live and furious in the studio in their drunken glory, loud, fast and full of attitude. This is their first LP, and since they live up to their song's titles ("Why I Drink," "Sauced Again") hopefully their lifestyles won't catch up to them before their second CD. - Tom B.

**CHERUBS - Short of Popular** (Trance Syndicate POBox 49771 Austin, TX 78765) This slab of released and unreleased cuts will shred your brain like taco cheese while it's on. But once it's off all I can remember is that it sounded like the bass was recorded with a short circuit - Des Jr.

**CHEW PAMELA - Mama Mellow** (1434 43<sup>rd</sup> St., North Bergen NJ 07047) Superfast punk-rock with noisy guitars and a lead singer who screams in English and Spanish about how much he hates his lousy life, George Steinbrenner, and most of the girls he meets. These guys - from North Bergen, NJ - are about as "Joisey" as it gets. I'm not sure if that's a compliment, but it is a distinction. - Jim T.

**CHINCHILLA - 101 Italian Hits** (Revelation/Crisis, P.O. Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232) Chinchilla are an all female San Diego quartet that play some extremely interesting and original art damaged punk, which sprawls all over the place and takes you along for the ride. It's refreshing to hear a band of women who aren't playing pretty pop a la Belly or bash you over the head metal grunge a la L7, 7 Year Bitch etc.... These women are breaking the mold. Don't get me wrong, Chinchilla can rock too, just not in your traditional punk fashion, they're style is more complex. Fans of newer Dischord stuff will dig Chinchilla, give them half a chance and you will too. - Rick K.

**CHIXDIGGIT** (SubPop) What can I say about these Canucks except that they're butt-loads o' FUN! Witty and goofy lyrics about playing bridge naked with your friend's mom and that fact that Henry Rollins is no fun. Musically these guys take their cues from the Ramones, but instead of coming off snotty like Screeching Weasel did, these guys come off charming. I think I heard somebody coin them "Prank Punk" I would say that's a pretty accurate tag. Find this, buy this, play this and you'll be smiling where ever you go. - Rick K.

**CHROME CRANKS - Love In Exile** Vinyl LP(PPC, PO Box 1689, NYC 10009) There are lots of NYC bands doing that Detroit Rock City/Stooges slash 'n burn rock thing, and the Chrome Cranks are somewhere in the middle of the pack. Now that they've got Bob Bert (ex Sonic Youth/Pussy Galore/Betwitched,) they do that Detroit/Stooges slash 'n burn rock thing

with great drumming, but I still don't wanna be their dog. - Jim T.

**CHRONIC FATIGUE** - *say something...* (Free Range, 818 Valley Rd, Upper Montclair NJ 07043) The similarities between singer/guitarist/songwriter Rob Leichman and Graham Parker are just to hard to overlook. Even the shuffling tempos and arrangements (complete with garagey organ fills) sound like Parker's early records. What's lacking is Parker's corrosive wit and nasty temper; without the bite, Chronic Fatigue's pub rock captures the mannerisms but not the urgency. - Jim T.

**CITIZEN FISH - Thirst** (Lookout!) I hated the Sub Humans and their yappy vocals and naive political rhetoric. Then for a short period, they discovered simple ska beats and metamorphized into an equally aggravating band called Culture Shock. Then in the early 90's, they changed their name to Citizen Fish but still clung to their pedestrian punk with "lick-tick" ska beats and the same quasi-political barking. Now they're on Lookout!, and we've got *Thirst*. The good news is the music has gotten better; it's still simple and the ska still gets annoying, but it's at least *listenable*. The bad news is that it's the same Dick singing the same rubbish about justice and fast food. If you have an English neighbor or relative, get them to read you the articles out of *Mother Jones* really loud and you'll get the same effect. - Johnny P.

**CLIFFORD NEVERKNEW - Cura Chroma** (Starfish Records) Odd and unexpected music from this trio, which includes Matt Hart from Squirtgun.



FACTION ZERO

Photo by Justin Borucki

Nothing like his other band, Clifford has Matt playing a dissonant guitar and singing very peculiar lyrics. Seven songs in 19 minutes, *Cura Chroma* is an artistic but abstract endeavor that miraculously avoids being "arty." - Johnny P.

**CLOCKWISE - She Was** (Pie, 67B Glen Cove Ave, Glen Cove NY 11542) So this is the mysterious Clockwise of Long Island. This is my first listen. They have the qualities of such bands as Fugazi, Statue (esp. the Revelation 7-inch,) and LI partners Silent Majority (but in the incestuous Long

Island scene, it's hard to know who influenced who.) I like this with the double vocals, great photographs and cool packaging. Definitely a keeper. - Rich H.

**CLUTCH** (East/West) Uh... Beavis... uhh, shut it off... huh huh huh. They want to be Deadguy and the Beastie Boys rolled into one. Guess what? It doesn't work. Uh... huh. - Rich H.

**COCKEYED GHOST** - *Keep Yourself Amused* (Big Deal, PO Box 2072 Peter Stuyvesant Station, NY, NY 10009-9998.) Jingly jangly pop that sounds as if it could have come out of England in the late 70's. Kinda like Nick Lowe or Squeeze, total powerpop at it's best, with a bit of Husker Du guitar edginess thrown in for good measure. This isn't a three chord pop/punk band, these are older guys who have mastered the art of writing the perfect hook. - Rick K.

**COLD WATER FLAT** - EP (Fort Apache/Gravel/MCA Records) Pretty ordinary rock and roll music appears on this 2 song CD single. I didn't hear anything striking, anything different or unique, or anything to hold my interest. - Paul S.

**COLEMAN/THREE STUDIES FOR A CRUCIFIZION** split LP (Mountain) - Complete spazz hardcore. My roommate, Ron, fucking loves this split and both these bands. He's seen them live and loves 'em. So if you trust a Long Island Hard Core Kid with X's on his hands, then get this. - Dave T.

**COMET** - *Chandler Musings* (Dedicated Records, 580 Broadway, Suite 1002, New York, NY 10012) Imagine that Spiritualized had slightly more pop/rock influence than they do. Now you have an idea what Comet sound like. Very mellow, very moody, a little bit psych. On occasion they rock a little bit harder, but it's still all very moody and dark. Lots of fuzz and reverb contribute to this effect on those louder moments. Some parts of this kind of remind me of the Beatles crossed with the Jesus and Mary Chain. Interesting, and really nice. - Paul S.

**CONGO NORVELL** - *The Dope, The Lies, The Vaseline* (Basural!) "Layered with a noir noise," their press release reads, "these tales are embellished with images of sinister glamour, smoking guns and filthy sheets." I don't know if I'd go that far, but this is a pretty impressive release nonetheless. Kid Congo Powers makes an impressive return to the world of music by creating a sort of "film-noir jazz soundtrack" that makes for oddly depressing background music. These are the kind of beats you'd expect to hear in dark, smoky lounge in the middle of the night in 1959 - not in some punk rock club on the Lower East Side. Ironically, though, this is where they've been playing, and local lounge-lizard trash have been taking notice. Bogey would be proud. - Dan E.

**CORM** - *Audio Flame Kit* (Shute, POB 2291 Kensington MD 20891) Right on! This record is akin to being dragged behind a moving automobile, noticing every detail in the asphalt which keeps slappin' you in the face, and loving it. "Audio Flame Kit" is heavy, intricate, well-played and a bit harder to digest than your average record. I'm reminded of bands like Rodan and Sunny Day Real Estate in terms of the feeling the music conveys (uh-oh, there he goes, getting all emo...), but the band had their own sound. Tight arrangements and dissonance outweigh this record's only flaw, a low vocal mix. - Mike F.

**CORROSION OF CONFORMITY** - *Wiseblood* (Columbia) Holy shit! I thought after their last release, Deliverance, these guys weren't gonna be able to match it, or release a better one. Well, this album proved my theory wrong. This album isn't as heavy or fast as past releases, but it still kicks some fuckin' ass! The opening two songs are incredible, and so is the title track. Lots of groovin' drum beats, awesome bass-lines, wah-wah riffs and solos, and outstanding vocals. This album also goes to show that they've matured an incredible amount musically. Check out the last 2 tracks on the album, and you'll know exactly what I'm talkin' about. This is C.O.C. at their best. - Phil P.

**COUCH OF EUREKA** - *Year of The Zombie* (Lookout Records) Cool rocking trash with a skewed and spacey edge to it. Includes a cover of the old Replacements chestnut "I'm in Trouble" which will hint at where they are coming from. This will be staying in its disc slot for a while. - Des Jr.

**CRANKCASE** - *Scrap* (Static Records, PO Box 40236, Philadelphia, PA 19106) Philly combo that starts with decent Touch & Go throb but then they completely stall this disc with the ridiculously prolonged "My Left Foot." My attention never fully returned, but track 5 of this EP was OK if I remember. Kind of a art-noize thing, I guess. - Des Jr.

**THE CRASH** - *Groovin' Hard* (Creep Records, Suite 220 252 E. Market St., West Chester, Pa. 19381) This Wilmington, Delaware based band plays

very thick, very Green Day like three chord rumbles that lack originality, but have a great deal of flavor. They are not shy about hiding their influences, especially on tracks like "April's On The Edge", which could have been taken out of the Screeching Weasel songbook. The bass playing here is above average and very thick, and the songs are peppered with growling, snotty vocals. Overall, while you have heard this before, it's a solid beginning for this young band. - Rich Q.

**THE CRAZY ADVENTURES OF LITTLE DYNAMO & AMAZING GRACE!** - (Poolan Records P.O. Box 723, Fairborn, OH 45324) This is a home recording of two elderly women who live together in a haze of pills, Milwaukee's Best, and insane arguments. A day in the life of these characters finds them bumming money off the streets, getting fucked up and going to Taco Bell, and accusing each other for making their lives miserable. Interesting in the slice of life it delivers--disoriented and hopeless--but as far as entertainment goes, it gets pretty boring. This is the kind of stuff to be treasured while amidst it all, not on CD. - Greg M.

**CREEDLE** - *When The Wind Blows* (Headhunter/Cargo) Creedle's third release of which they continue their twisted blend of circus/punk/oldschool jazz, almost like Mr. Bungle only better and with out that extremely annoying singer guy. Well if your not a jazz fan or just have a short attention span, then look else where, but if your looking for something interesting and truly different or just feel daring, then check out Creedle, they're a breath of fresh air. - Rick K.

**CROWN OF THORNZ** - *Mentally Vexed* (Another Planet) Well, this album has had its delays, including band members being involved in side projects, SKARHEAD, and other things. But they're back with a new one and they're fuckin' intense! All the songs pretty much run into each other, so the brutality just pounds in your face. It's fresh N.Y.H.C., very original and very melodic, so hook up! - Phil P.

**CRUCIFUCKS** - *L.D. Eye* (Alternative Tentacles) Doc Corbin Dart brings his distinctive sound to this CD as the only original member of this band. Past members of this Lansing, MI band, which formed in '82, included Steve Shelley, and Steve Merchant. They're still angry with the troubles of the world - but not as hard edged as they once were in their day. Entertaining but not essential. - Tom B.

**CYCOMOTOGOAT** - *Braille* (What Are Records?, 2401 Broadway Boulder, Colorado 80304) A very unique, yet sometimes difficult to describe record here. Some of this worked for me, but I spent most of my listen just plowing through it. Hoboken's Cycomotogoat make an attempt to blend various musical styles together without ever really focusing on one. There are flashes of talent here, including some very hip funk that splashes through the entire release, and an honest retro-rock track, "She's My Sunshine". "Sunshine" was the bright spot for me (please believe me - I did not mean that pun), for it features a thick bassline and a loveable guitar riff. However, the record as a whole just did not do it for me. - Rich Q.

**DESCENDENTS** - *Everything Sucks* (Epitaph) Milo's back from college and the world is a beautiful place again - especially if you love drinking coffee, cutting school, and never plan to grow up. "Everything Sux," "Coffee Mug," "Sick-O-Me" and my personal favorite, "When I Get Old," capture all that old Descendents magic - catchy riffs, supercharged guitars, Bill Stevenson's furious drums, and Milo's geeky but loveable vocals croaking out the lyrics. "She Loves Me" is the best piece of pop/punk Stevenson's written since "She's My Ex." The album closes with a cut called "Thank You." No, guys. Thank you. - Jim T.

**DEVO** - *Adventures of the Smart Patrol* (Discovery) Before you go rushing out and buy what you think is a Devo album you don't have, heed warning: This is not a new or previously unreleased Devo album. This is the soundtrack to an interactive CD-ROM game of the same name. I've not played the game so I cannot attest to its fun and excitement, but I can say that the soundtrack is a bit inferior to the Devo name. The Devo songs should be known to fans: "Mechanical Man," "Peek A Boo," "Beautiful World," "Whip it," "Freedom of Choice," and "Jocko Homo." As far as the rest of the disc, well it kinda sucks. The Smart Patrol does a few songs written by Mark Mothersbaugh but they are quite deficient in that they're too smooth to clunk like the beautiful Devo-mind. There is also a song by Brian Applegate and one by Scott Orsi, which are decent... but with Devo's name on the cover, they don't quite make it. Try the game or buy some old Devo albums, this is a waste of time. - Greg M.

**DIESEL BOY** - *Cock Rock* (Honest Don's Recordings) - I knew this band looked familiar. The songs from their Fat Wreck 7" are on here. But there's nothing standout on here. And I just can't stand those collages. Stupid. Song-writing like "Let's not be friends cuz then we can't fuck." Like I said, stupid. - Dave T.

**DIGGER** - *Powerballt* (Hopeless Records, POBox 7495 Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495) Cool self deflating punk rock ala older Mr. T Experience or maybe Doc Hopper. No big deal but pretty good anyway. - Des Jr.

**DINOAGAH** - *Old Material, New Format* (Actionboy 300 Records, PO Box 14471, Chicago, IL 60614) This CD EP, as its name implies, is a reissue of a couple of 7" singles onto a CD. And thank goodness they did this, as the originals are damn hard to find and this music is really worth having. Quiet, Slint-ish indie-pop. Recommended. - Paul S.

**DOGMATICS** - *1981-86* (Vagrant/Shredder) The reissue of the year, as far as I'm concerned. The Dogmatics were a Boston garage band with the identical-twin O'Halloran brothers on bass and guitar. They played a wonderfully sloppy pastiche of 6T's garage-rock and punk and were equally adept at goofy, fun tunes and sincere, sentimental ballads (their "Thayer Street" still evokes mid-80's Boston for me better than any other recording of the era.) They were one of my favorite Boston bands back in the days when the Boston scene ruled, but sadly, it all came to a tragic end with the death of bassist Paul O'Halloran in a motorcycle accident, and the Dogmatics were relegated to the cut-out bin of indie-rock history. My sincere thanks to Shredder and Vagrant Records for putting out this CD, and I heartily recommend checking it out to discover how much wonderful indie-rock could be back in the days when guys started bands with the idea of getting drunk and chasing girls, not getting rich and chasing down that big major label deal. - Jim T.

**DONUTS N GLORY** - *When Preg-nasours Ruled the Earth* (Liberation Records) - Super fast, catchy punk rock in the vein of Propagandhi and early NOFX. This is the kind of stuff people liked when Fat Wreck put out good stuff. Check this out. It's been in my stereo forever and I fucking love it each time I listen to it. Making fun of gender roles and punk rock. This is great. - Dave T.

**DREAD MOTIF** (726 Mable St., New Milford NJ 07646) Heavy but not metal, with thumb-popping funk bass and vocals mixed way up, like a pop record. Okay, but they need to turn the energy level up a few notches yet. - Jim T.

**DRILL TEAM** - "Pluto My Cream + 3" (In Bloom/Reprise Records) Four songs of Abba meets My Bloody Valentine. Plenty of fuzzy, noisy guitars, with a 70s style Euro pop sensibility. Understated, angst-ridden vocals. Dark, but bouncy. Not too bad. - Paul S.

**THE DUMMIES** (Get Hip! Records PO Box 668 Canonsburg, PA 15317) Debut album from NYC punk-as-fuckers. I had been waiting for this slab since getting my mitts on a Get Hip! single and two Bag of Hammers singles. This is punk rock the way it was intended to sound-Ear damaging, paint peeling distortion vocals, searing walls of guitar and bowel shaking rhythm section that's tighter than a dead horse's belly. And speed, baby, is the name of the game. They push this machine into the red and go for broke, never looking back or taking prisoners, leaving nothing but scorched earth and broken hearts in their wake. This is the big time, baby. This is rock and roll. - David B.

**DURA-DELINQUENT** - (Echostatic/Space Baby Records 2802 E.Madison #159 Seattle, WA 98112) Lower East Side-styled swampy punk/blues from Seattle. Though I liked it, I can't say I haven't heard it before. Matter of fact, I heard it on a Chrome Cranks record, and oddly enough, two Cranks produced this one. Not bad, but I vote Chrome Cranks. - David B.

**DUVALBY BROS.** - *The Sleepytime Medicine Band* (Cambodia Recordings, 16013 Waterloo Rd. Suite 405, Cleveland, OH 44110) Groggy interludes pronounced with an occasional crescendo of screams and feedback. What's up with all the music made for cold-blooded animals? DuValby Bros. creep along the same path of apathetic tranquillity that is tread by such artists as Palace. But where a Palace incarnation would continue with business as usual, DuValby Bros. fall into short bursts of semi-dissonant angst. Like sleepwalking and bumping into the occasional wall. - Greg M.

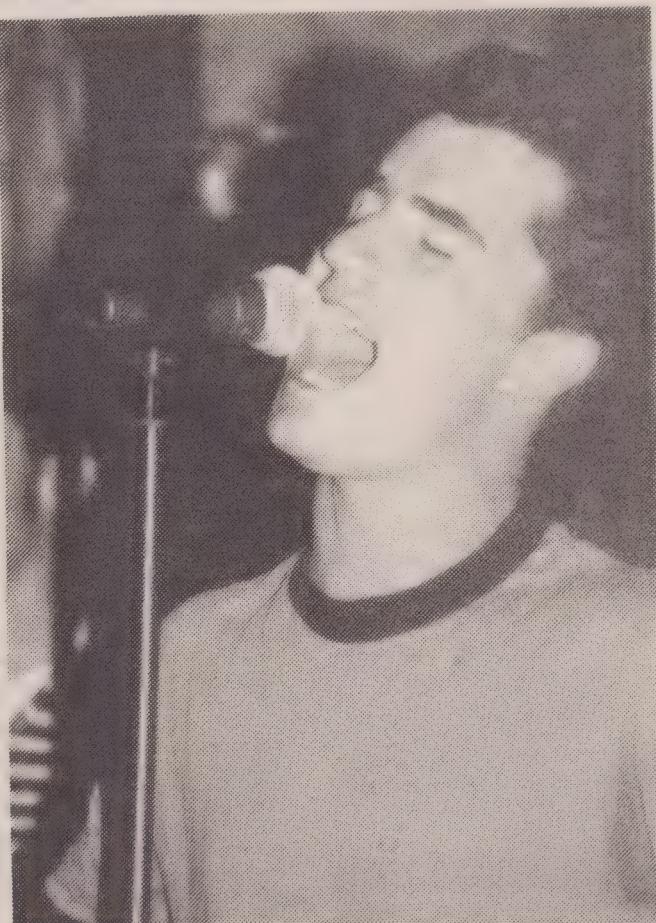
**DYSTOPIA ONE** - *Attempted Mustache* (Rawkus Entertainment) The space age gone bad, D.O. sound like they would be a great band to have blasted live through a club's PA system. This isn't music, it's entertainment, and there's nothing wrong with that. Each song has a twisted theme put to ugly sci-fi music that doesn't sound like the same thing over and over. This is pure guerrilla theater - bizarre yet strikingly honest takes on such

subject matter as a visit to the STD clinic and police as bad guys, put to music that is brutal, funny, weird, and (shudder, shudder) talented. Not for the timid, but definitely for fans of the disturbing side of art. - Michael C.

**EARTH** - *Penstar: In The Style Of Demons* (Subpop) I've been wanting to hear these guys for quite a while and Penstar is it. Earth is nothing like I've ever heard before, slo-mo sonic soundscapes with an emphasis on the heavy end of things. They are definitely one of those bands that you can only listen to at full volume. Imagine if the Melvins listened to a lot of ambient spacey stuff, that's as close to a description as I can get. Just take my word for it, Earth's sound is sooo huge it swallows you up..-Rick K.

**EAST RIVER PIPE** - *Mel* (Merge) Breezy; light and airy; poppy. No raucous punk-rock here. This is an album full of slow tunes dripping with plenty of atmosphere. The track "We're Going to Nowhere" is an especially rewarding song, with an almost Spiritualized feel to it. In fact, the album as a whole has the feel of a poppier Spiritualized. This is really nice to listen to. - Paul S.

**EDNA SWAP** - *Chicken* (Island Independent) Slightly funky "alternative" rock. It's very slickly produced, and has excellent musicianship. The vocals are especially powerful and heartfelt. It's nothing



Dan Cromie, FUTURE PRIMITIVE

Photo by Jim T.

unique or groundbreaking, but it's decent listening. - Paul S.

**ED'S TOO SHORT** - *Everything's Small* (Birdcage Records, PO Box 784, Sierra Madre, CA 91024-0784) Some of the songs are have a vaguely country feel to them. A few have hints of post-punk. All are very slick, with faux-angst vocals, sounding kinda like late era Led Zeppelin. The songs are obviously geared toward trying to get a shot at commercial "alternative" radio and MTV 120 Minutes. Zzzzzzz. - Paul S.

**EL VEZ** - *G.I. AY!, AY! Blues* (Big Pop, PO Box 12870, Philadelphia, PA 19108) I've heard about El Vez, aka the Mexican Elvis for quite sometime, but until now never heard him. Well, for starters he's hip, funny, and a revolutionary. He's on a mission, and through his funky-campy-Elvis fueled rock n'roll, not only does he remind us of the unfortunate plight of the Mexican people, but also shows off a strong sense of national pride. He does this without being preachy and pulls it off in a very clever and tongue and cheek fashion. El Vez also has fun, singing about how goofy us white

folk can be as well as some nutty covers of "Takin Care Of Business", "Low Rider", and "Rock N' Roll Suicide". "G.I. AY!, AY!, Blues" is a fun record, I can't say it's something I'd listen to everyday, but isn't that why it's called novelty music? I hear the only way to truly experience El Vez is live with the help of the Memphis Mariachis and the Lovely Elvettes. Did I mention he used to sing for the seminal L.A. punk band the Zeros. This guy rules!!! - Rick.

**ELEVATOR TO HELL** - Parts 1-3 (Sub Pop Records) One of those rare records where being pretentious works. Nothing here begs to be taken seriously, and that's a good thing. There's a grand off-the-wallness at work here. The whole thing has a homemade feel: vocals way up in the mix, deliberately cheesy keyboards appearing out of nowhere, funny drum machine sounds, and liberties with the soundboard you wouldn't peg a "real" engineer taking. Add in the campy subject matter and the experience becomes utterly amusing; great deviance from serious soundwaves. Michael C.

**JEREMY ENIGK** - *Return of the Frog Queen* (Sub Pop Records, PO Box 20645, Seattle, WA 98192) This is very theatrical music, reminiscent of the Beatles at their best in some spots. There's a back-up orchestra, and the vocals even sound a little like John Lennon in some places. The song construction is very similar, too. One of the songs is the aptly titled, "Carnival," there's a circus atmosphere about many of the songs. And a little bit of a mysterious quality, like a carnival. Though it is similar to stuff put out a long time ago, it's so different from most of what's being released nowadays, it's refreshing. - Paul S.

**FACE TO FACE** (A&M) I guess this is Face To Face's major label debut (not a sneaky "Victory Records" release.) Two words: Fuck 'em. Twelve songs of the same ol' rehashed Cali bullshit. You can get their stuff on indie labels like Dr. Strange and Fat Wreck Chords if you really want to hear them. In a year, nobody is going to know who they are anyway. - Rich H.

**FACTION ZERO** - *Liberation* (J/T Records, PO Box 20300 Tompkins Square Station, NYC, NY 10009) This disc jumps out of your speakers with high impact, politically fueled, intelligent, blazing hardcore. Solid musicianship that masters the use of tempo changes to create dramatic effects. Anyone who is a fan of Tree and has strong political convictions will love this band. Each track rages and runs over you leaving you struggling to get up before the next song jumps on top of you again. Listening to this left me exhausted. Great stuff. - Rich Q.

**FAILURE FACE** - *Everybody Sucks* (Burrito Records, c/o Bob Suren, PO Box 3204, Brandon, FL 33509-3204) Hardcore/thrash in the vein of DRI and other cross-over bands. Apparently this record is they're last one, they've broken up. Oh well. - Rick K.

**FASTBACKS** - *New Dimensions In Sound* (SubPop) What can I say it's another Fastbacks record. With everything you'd expect from the kings of Seattle pop/punk; sweet melodies with ultra catchy riffs galore. The perfect summer soundtrack for cruisin' in your automobile. - Rick K.

**FAULTLINE** - *Roots Of The Rape Culture* (Endless Fight Records, P.O. Box 1083, Old Saybrook, CT 06475). Hardline straightedge from Connecticut. If all sounds the same to me. - Jon C.

**FELIX FRUMP** - *Mt. Cockmore* (Iguana Records, PO Box 110210, Nutley, NJ 07110) Another pop/punk band with goofy lyrics and fun sing alongs. Even though this style is getting tired even for me, these guys somehow have a real fun feel to them, which comes through on this CD. - Rick K.

**FETAL REMAINS** (Ominous Records, PO Box 20937, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87154) Fetal Remains? I thought I was doomed to listen to some sort of cheap Cannibal Corpse rip-off death metal band. Instead, I was doomed to listen to this semi-melodic, semi-drunk, wholly sloppy hardcore. There is non stop energy here, and in some instances the mistakes help to make this band easier to like in a goofy, harmless kind of way. Fetal Remains are not breaking any new ground, not even denting it. However, they do attempt to say something in their lyrics, focusing on political issues, but they just do not seem to have the heart to back up what they say with any sort of musical bite. - Rich Q.

**FIENDZ** - *Wact* (Black Pumpkin Records) - Keeping it going and proving age doesn't mean shit in this scene are the Fiendz with their latest album, *Wact*. Might be a bit more mellow but as always, it's soothing and catchy as fuck. Fuck fuck fuck this is one damn good band, and they're from Jersey too! Right on! - Dave T.

**FIRE PARTY** (Dischord) According to the info sheet that came with this, this is one of the last in the long, slow process of re-releasing back catalog

onto CD. And I guess Dischord has followed the old rule of saving the best for last. Fire Party has always been one of my more favorites of the Dischord roster. They had a raw intensity like few bands of the time. Musically, they teeter between the worlds of post-punk, garage, and DC-style emo. This CD collects their two 12" vinyl releases on Dischord from back in the late 80s, along with four previously unreleased Peel sessions tracks. I sure am glad Amy Pickering's primal vocals, and Natalie Avery's beautiful, rocking guitar lines. I sure am glad Dischord re-issued this on CD, so a new generation of music fans can discover the greatness that was Fire Party. - Paul S.

**FIVE BY NINE** - *Recognize* (One Foot, PO Box 3834, Cherry Hill NJ 08034) Epitaph-styled pretty boy punk. Lotsa "whoa-whoooooas." The hidden bonus rap song is humorous. Scary, but humorous. - Paul B.

**FIVE SECONDS EXPIRED** - *Null* (Another Planet) Tuned down guitars, and a big 90's heavy metal/rock sound here. The growling vocals and snare drum sound turned me off right away in spite of the considerable amount of metal damage done on this disk. The musicianship and creativity are derivative of a few more popular bands in this genre but I'm sure that they'll find their niche among the post metal moshers you can find in the pit at the Slayer and Pantera shows. - John L.

**FLAMINGOES** - *Plastic Jewels* (Big Pop) Jewels indeed - after my first listen I was going to say they had a Brit sound - but duh, they're from Herfordshire. They sound some what like Animals That Swim. Identical twins Jude and James fondness for Roxy music and a string of shitty jobs were an influence for this CD of sincere, non disposable pop. J&M Chain producer Dick Meaney brings forth nicely their sense of disillusionment and betrayal which these wanna be glam pretty boys describe as romantic realism. A good one. - Tom B.

**THE FLAVOR CHANNEL** - *Plexicom* (Mendacity;Steamboat Records, PO Box 479164, Chicago, IL 60647) What a damn fine CD this is. The band, according to the press info, was formed 5 years ago at Northwestern University, in the Chicago area. The members are accomplished musicians and composers, some writing scores for Chicago area theater productions. And this all shows. The music is expertly performed and the styles diverse. There's some garage music, mod-influenced music, even some music that sounds sort of like the *Twin Peaks* soundtrack done indie-style. I heard a little bit of early Bill Nelson influence on "Ride Your Bike." "Little Thing" is a classic 50's doo-wop ballad. I highly recommend this album. And I know that I'm going to keep an eye out for them when they play out in Chicago next time. - Paul S.

**FLUFFER** - *Ask Me What It Feels Like* (Link, 121 W. 27th St., NYC 10001) One of the new slew of all girl bands (except for the drummer) that's equal parts screaming and harmonization. Not much new here, but if you like your distortion pedals with a little femininity, check this out. By the way, the vocalist and the bassist both look exactly like Anna Radakovich, the "Details" sex columnist. - Dan E.

**FLUFFY** - *5 Live* (The Enclave) Raw, moderate tempo, old style punk rock from this UK band, made up of four women. This was recorded live at CBGB, according to the liner notes, and the production is pretty damn good for a live CD. The music is a little slower than I would like, sounding a little too grungey, but it has a great rawness, a garage-band sort of feel, and the honesty of the original punks. - Paul S.

**FORESKIN 500** - *Starbent but Superfreaked* (Priority Records, PO Box 2590, Los Angeles, CA 90078) Heavy, metallish white boy funk music. If you like that sort of thing, and you can get past the super-slick production of this, you'll probably like it a lot. As for me, I don't go in for this kinda thing. - Paul S.

**FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE** - (TAG/Atlantic) A cut above the typical "alternative" rock. It's pretty similar in song construction and style to everything else on commercial "alternative" radio, but has more bright spots than usual. "She's Got a Problem" and "Survival Car" are a couple of those bright spots. Of course, there are some kinda dull songs, too, like "Sick Day," which kind of drags and goes nowhere. But overall, reasonably decent. - Paul S.

**The FREEZE / The BOLLWEEVILS** - *A Deadly Duo Split CD* (Dr. Strange Records) Quattro cuts each from Boston stalwarts The Freeze and Chicago's Bollweevils. Solid. - Des Jr.

**FRENCH** (Bear Records, 295 Greenwich St. #177, NYC 10007) French features two members of Cell as well as Andrew from Ruby Falls, who you might have heard on the "Half-Cocked" soundtrack. This EP is chockful of

your girlfriend will like. This Chino, California-based band plays exceedingly hyperactive, unoffensive punk brimming with hormonal angst. The energy abounds as each song bounces off your walls with that Bouncing Souls/Weston/Humpers kinda feel. The musicianship here is too high quality to label this pop-punk, but I think you know what I'm getting at. In the end I liked it, but this will not blow you away. - Rich Q.

**HEADCLEANER** - *No Offense Meant.....Plenty Taken* (Big Deal, PO Box 2072 Peter Stuyvesant Station, NY, NY 10009-9998) Three piece noise rockers from England, with pounding drums, thumping bass and frantic squalling guitars make up this trio's sound. The vocals are reminiscent of David Yow, psychotic ramblings about whatever. If the whole AmRep thing floats your boat check out Headcleaner, as for me I think I'll skip it. - Rick K.

**THE HEATHERS** - *I Came / Said* (Circumstantial) I listened, I yawned. I've always had a weak spot for girl bands (this is actually 4 girls and a guy), but now that girl groups are not such a novelty - I need something more. This Cleveland based band gets good reviews for their live shows, but unfortunately that energy does not make it to disc. This band was formed as a joke to win worst band competition - they didn't and don't deserve to. Alas, ho-hum - Tom B.

**HEDGE** (Andrew Rodriguez, 17 Allen St., Passaic NJ 07055)- Jerseyites raging against the machine with staccato bursts of hardcore guitars, machinegun drums, and shouted vocals. Hard and powerful, the difference is that Hedge's lyrics focus on the personal rather than the political. A decent stab at what is becoming a familiar genre (industrial hardcore? sledgehammer punk?) - Jim T.

**GARY HEFFERN** - *Painful Days* (Y Records) Songs of heroin addiction and heartache with a heavy country western/acoustic influence. I loved the title of one song "Living is a Job Because of People Like You". Gary's favorite things are camping and his dog. Much like those likes, this is an uncomplicated album that I could not help but find beautiful and relaxing. Sentimental music consisting of harmonica, violin and the cello. - Tom B.

**HEFT** - *In a Bathtub...* (Motherbox Records, 60 Denton Ave., E.Rockaway, NY, 11518) Motherbox has found another gem here. Heft is a group of fun loving kids who play what can only be described as ska-pop. Sometimes. Other times on the disc, they play straight ahead melodic punk. I loved Heft musically, but their sense of humor carries the album. Their ode to Winona Ryder would almost make you a fan, and they have written one of the

classic anthems for all the lonely guys out their suffering through lonely Friday Nights (far too close to home here, kids!). Other cuts that put a big smile on my face were "Julie" and the hilarious "Crack Baby". If Beck thinks he's hip and/or funny, he looks like Bob Dole next to these kids. Listening to Heft will actually make you feel good. Thanks, Heft. - Rich Q.

**HELIKOPTER** - *Sofa Charmer* (Hat Factory Records, Box 41343, Baltimore, MD 21203-6343) For those of you who loved early Dinosaur Jr., before the majors got hold of them, before they became watered down and boring, then you'll totally dig this Baltimore three piece. They're kinda like the east coast Further; fuzzed-out indie-rock with all the right hooks. Unfortunately I believe they just broke up, but I hear the guitar player Cullen and drummer Adam have a new band called Science Kit, so keep an eye out for it. - Rick K.

**HELLBENDER** - *Footprints of the American Chicken* (Reservoir) Hillbender are one of the hardest working, underpaid punk bands I know of. They tour constantly, write and record new music all the time, and put up with all the bullshit that most bands bitch and whine about prior to having it force them to break up. The music, lyrics and packaging on 'Footprint...' harshly reflect that. I can hear a lot of frustration and depression in their music, along with a lot of love and passion for what they do. Needless to say, this is their best release, to date recalling a hybrid Jawbreaker/J Church sound. Vocally, they've come a long way (eons ahead of their first few releases) and as the vocals have developed, so has the writing and playing. The recording here is a very accurate depiction of their live performance; energetic, slightly shaky and often on the verge of breaking up. I'm excited for them, having found a new home on Reservoir records. - John L.

**HER MAJESTY THE BABY** - *Mary* (Nu.Millenia Records, 10585 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90025) Bouncy ethereality. This is really cool stuff. It's got a wispy, ethereal quality, but it also has the bounciness and attitude of new wave of the early 80s. Strong female vocals are featured, reminding me of Jenny Toomey of Tsunami. Some of the songs add fuzzy wall-o-guitar to the mix for a heavier feel. But the bounce is never gone. Plus, the band name and the cover graphics alone make it all worth it! - Paul S.

**ROBYN HITCHCOCK** - *Moss Elixer* (Warner Bros. Records) This is very nice. Some mellow, folk music-like songs, complete with acoustic instruments blended in with the electric ones. Other songs are a little more poppy, but still really calm and smooth. This is a very relaxing album to



I.D.K.

Photo by Dave Thirsty

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THE HONEYDOGS - *Everything, I Bet You* (October Records, 6401 Wayzata Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55426) This is *Party of Five* music with a little twang; maybe a headliner at that cheesy Peach Pit club on *Beverly Hills 90210*. There may be a talented group buried beneath this pap (check out the beginnings of "Moth" and "Busy Man"), but - like pap fans and makers everywhere - they settle for less. Maybe they're just trying to sound commercial on purpose. There are better and worse things to listen to. - Michael C.

HORACE PINKER - *Burn Tempe To The Ground* (One Foot Records) I'm not completely familiar with this label, but out of all the records I've heard on it, Horace Pinker is the most established and well-known. This full-length blends Fat Wreck Chords hook-ridden punk with Cheap Trick via Big Drill Car (who rock in their own right as well.) Another quality indie release by non-mainstream types. - Paul B.

HORNY TOAD - *Thirteen* (Domo Records, 245 Spalding Drive, Beverly Hills, California, 90212) Take a little ska, some reggae, a pinch of rock, a dash of salsa, mix in a little punk, and flavor with two former members of Suicidal Tendencies - what do you get? Well, Horny Toad of course! This high energy combo takes a little bit of everything they love, and has ever influenced them and throw it in your face all at once. This is not a typical hybrid band that tries something that sounds interesting on paper, but just ends up creating a mish-mash of nonsense. Horny Toad produces a record full of surprises. Granted, there are some misses, which is to be expected considering the nature of what they are undertaking, but as a listener, you have no idea what is coming next. Their wide array of abilities translates not into mere imitations of their heroes, but something truly authentic. The majority of this disc is pure fun, and makes you ache to see them live, be it for the rhythmic salsa, throbbing reggae, or even the brief splashes of punk fury. Horny Toad is a band with a ton of talent who sometimes attempt to show off too much within one song. However, if you are looking for a spicy addition to your diet, and your musical boundaries will permit it, check this out. This is a record for everyone who complains about all bands sounding the same. Generic this is not. - Rich Q.

I.D.K. - *To Kill For The Good Of The Fight For the Right To Be Right* (Bush League, PO Box 10165, New Brunswick NJ 08906) A very solid punk record by a band that doesn't need to rush through every song at warp speed to get its points across. In fact, the steady, often slogging, tempos are what make I.D.K. stand apart - that and a touch of British Oi! Influences, including soccer-stadium singalong choruses (without the clichéd Oi! Oi! Oi! refrains.) These songs are from an out-of-print 7 inch and a demo tape; I'll be looking forward to new material. - Jim T.

IGNITE - *Past Our Means* (Revelation) I am embarrassed to say that I truly had not been paying much attention to Revelation Records for a while now, but did this disc ever wake me up! Ignite just explodes through your speakers on this all-too-short six song release. Not a bad tune in the bunch, and it just smokes. Pure breakneck, intense hardcore with a great sound. This is certainly not a radical departure from what Revelation has released in the past, but Ignite really blew my away. Lead singer Zoli Teglas has a tremendous voice that he puts on display from the opening seconds of the first song. The band rages against the ills of the world without ever sounding corny. Like any good hardcore band, they are driven by frustration and disgust, and the music reflects their politics. I will have to definitely seek more stuff from these guys. Just great, where have I been? - Rich Q.

INCREDIBLE FORCE OF JUNIOR - *Let the World Fall Apart* (Up Records, PO Box 21328, Seattle, WA 98111-3328) Incredibly good power indie-pop. Loads of great hooks, powerful vocals, and solid production add up to one of the better releases I've listened to lately. Recommended. - Paul S.

INSTANT GIRL - *Post-coital* (Allied Recordings, P.O. Box 460683, San Francisco, Ca. 94146-0683) Truly amazing. Raw, stimulating punk with a feminist perspective. Former members of the dazzling Spitboy rise from the ashes in Instant Girl. The record was produced by Steve Albini, and I hate talking about producers, but Albini's minimalist approach heightens the whirlwind delivery of each track. The lyrics here are complex, challenging and unapologetically confrontational, which only elevates the intensity of

the music. These are women demanding equality, and they do so with honesty, and unrelenting rage. While Instant Girl may not be as over the top musically as Spitboy, there is something indefinable here. Something that captures the listener and forces you to pay careful attention to what is being said. I loved it all the way through. Instant Girl has produced a great piece of work, that helps ease the loss of Spitboy. - Rich Q.

ISOE - *Manhattan Lullaby* (Qwibjo Records, 1765 Garwood Dr., Cherry Hill NJ 08003) Jazzy pop standards with female chanteuse vocals. Dry as a vodka martini, and just as sophisticated. Probably not for the typical Jersey Beat reader, although my mom - a big Billie Holiday fan - loved it. - Jim T.

JENNYANYKIND - *Revelator* (Elektra) Somewhat soulful rock and roll, with some mod undertones to it. Kinda cool. "Day of the Dead" is a really catchy tune that stands out as quite different from the rest of the songs. The best way I can think of to describe it is as Latin Donovan, if you can imagine that. The final track, "Soul," is very bluesy and passion-filled. Wow. - Paul S.

JOHNNY FRANKENSTEIN - *Suicide Hill* (Johnny Frankenstein, 510 Cove Wood Blvd., Webster, NY 14580-1110) Very rootsy rock and roll, sounding like a cross between garage-style and the Rolling Stones. The first cut, "Scandal Wrapped in Skin," has some moments that remind me a little of the late, lamented Naked Raygun. The title track blends the garage sound with a little hint of Beach Boys. - Paul S.

JUGHEAD'S REVENGE - *Image Is Everything* (Nitro). I remember really disliking the last Jughead's Revenge CD I got to review, so I wasn't to thrilled when this new one showed up. But surprise surprise, I actually liked it quite a bit. Not at all metal, which is what I remember from their last one, but stripped-down 80's-style LA punk instead. Reminded me a bit of the RKL stuff on Mystic, and even the Chemical People in places. Lots of pissed off energy and hooks. A very pleasant surprise. - Jon C.

JUNE OF 44 - "The Anatomy of Sharks" E.P. (Quarterstick/Touch & Go) Produced by Bob Weston, this 3 song EP is somewhat different from June of 44's usual offerings. The first and third tracks have a lot more edge and noise to them, in a Shellac sort of way. The middle track is a more severe departure, in that it consists of pretty wild, latin influenced minimalism. Bass, percussion, clapping, and trumpet are the instruments used. It sort of feels like being at Carnival in Rio on a really weird night at about 3am. Very cool release. Now I can't wait for the new full length, which isn't due out until sometime in 1997. - Paul S.

KEETA SPEED - *Get Dressed Twice* (Gimlet Records, 534 E. 6th St. #3 NY, NY 10009) Heavily influenced by Patti Smith, with a real arty farty feel to it. No thanx. - Rick K.

KEVIN K BAND - *Party Down* (13<sup>th</sup> Street Entertainment, 338 E 13 St, NYC 10003) Grungy (in the pre-Pearl Jam sense of the word) bar band rock. Think Johnny Thunders, without the heroin. This kind of sloppy garage-punk sounds great with a few beers on Saturday night, although there are way too many bands around NYC right now who do the same sort of thing with a lot more panache than these guys. - Jim T.

KILLING TIME - *Unavoidable* (Blackout!) Physically, I'm too scrawny to go see this stuff live, but mentally, I'm just as tattooed, pierced, and buffed as these guys, and completely protected by my stereo so I won't get crushed by the "Wall Of Death" production. Total moshcore with chunka chunka parts and bass breaks, not unlike Biohazard were at one point, yet somehow a hell of a lot more respectable. Sing along now... " Been betrayed... be-trayed.. by yooooou... (chunka chunka)." - Paul B.

KNOCKOUT - *Think It's Time* (Dr. Dream, 841 W. Collins Ave., Orange CA 92667) Three guys and a girl from Orange County CA, who play straight up no frills punk rock-n-roll in the same vein as Social Distortion or the Supersuckers. Real fun stuff. - Rick K.

LENOLA - *The Last 10 Feet Of The Suicide Mile* (Tappersize, 884 Green-tree Sq. Plaza, Rt 73 No., Marlton NJ 08053) South Jersey shoegazers who manage an impressively yummy approximation of Jesus & Mary Chain/My Bloody Valentine-style distortion-pop. Quavery. - Jim T.

LESS THAN JAKE - *Losing Streak* (No Idea Records, PO Box 14636 Gainesville, Florida 32604) More cool fast ska-punk from these Florida maniacs. The packaging here is pretty hip, for it's a 5" that is completely blank-absolutely no idea which side you are playing. Minimalistic, but effective. I first fell for this band after hearing their version of the old Tommy Tutone song "867-5309/Jenny", now I can safely say that I like their own stuff as well. Nice subtle touches of ska without becoming another Boston clones. - Rich Q.

**LICKITY SPLIT** - *Volume Won* (Double Deuce Records PO Box 515, NY, NY 10159-0515) This is a D.C. band that definitely breaks away from the mold of most D.C. bands. No emo-core guitar swirl here. This disc is full of stomping sing-along punk from beginning to end. Very crisp recording enables you to hear each component of this band, all of which are impressive. If you are into name dropping, you may like to know that Lickity Split includes members of the Suspects, Pie Taster and Avail. Regardless of what bands these guys used to play in, this is a solid, fun disc with tempo changes and good pacing. The disc opens with "Answers" which blows you away immediately. Other highlights include "Loser", "Pass It On" and "Another Place". Very hip. - Rich Q.

**LILYS** - *Better Can't Make Your Life Better* (Primary Recordings / Elektra Entertainment Group) There's a heavy, strong 60s mod influence at work here. Very Beatles-esque. It's sorta like listening to a Beatles Anthology disc. Ooh! More lost Beatles songs! Not bad, but nothing original. - Paul S.

**ARTO LINDSAY** - *O Corpo Sutil The Subtle Body* (Bar None) Indie-style lounge music. Or is it lounge-style indie music? In any case, it's an updated sound of the romantic pop music of years past. It's well done, and good background music with a Bossa Nova feel. I don't know if it merits really serious listening, but it's good to work or read to. - Paul S.

**LIMECELL** (Headache Records) I've been waiting for the CD ever since seeing them live almost a year ago when, after getting lost in Passaic, they described that fine city as shit on earth. Headache Records loves punk of bands that can drink a lot and have that working joe lustre about them, and these guys fit the bill. I'm definitely a fan, it's tough no to be with songs like White Trash, Crackhooker, and Morning People. They also apparently hate straight edge vegans - no problem there! While a good overview of the material, their live show is must see for sheer intensity. - Tom B.

**LOGS IN THE MAINSTREAM** - *I Know I Am But What Are You?* (501 Adams Lane, No. Brunswick NJ 08902) Quirky, goofy, spastic, plastic pop. Think Devo, Ween, only more lowbrow and more NJ... well, okay, maybe They Might Be Giants is more like it. If you find Weird Al Yankovic amusing, you'll probably get a chuckle from these guys. Anybody know where the Punsters are these days? - Jim T.

**LOST, LONELY, & VICIOUS** (K&S Records, P.O. Box 451, Piermont, NY, 10568) Remember the darkness beneath the synthesizers of 80's pop? L,L, & V managed to bring that brand of happy creepiness in the 90's, trading the overbearing synth for a sound dominated by trippy guitars. Their progressions sound like so many hits from the Reagan era it's not even

funny - but it's cool! The tons of reverb on the guitar gives the music a lost, otherworldly (sci-fi?) feel while Katie Raials strong, earthy voice reminds us that we haven't left the planet. Tracks "I Got Lost," "Do You Know Me," and "Paris is Waiting" are strong hit contenders. Recommended. - Michael C.

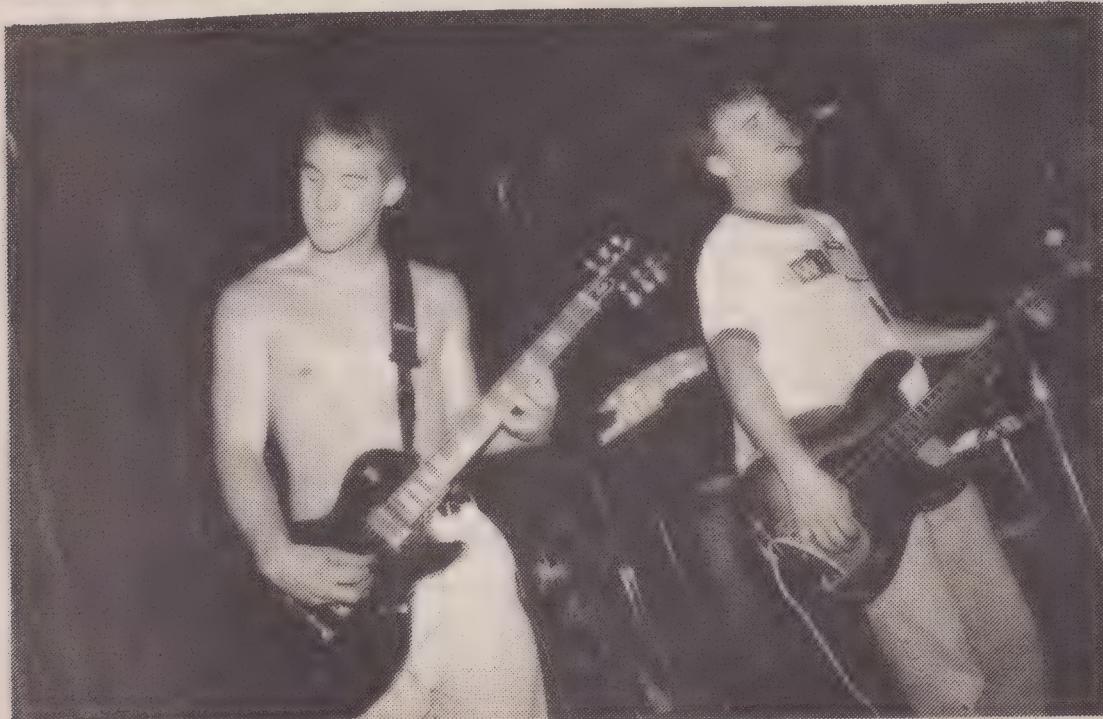
**LOUDSPEAKER** - *Re-Vertebrate* (Another Planet) Somewhat heavy "alternative" rock, with a strong heavy bass. Guitar work is superb on a lot of the tracks. Sometimes this band sounds influenced by the Jesus Lizard, and other times they sound like a heavy bar band. I dunno, it could have been a little more exciting to listen to, given the level of musicianship evident, but it just didn't do it for me. - Paul S.

**LOVE IN REVERSE** - *I Was Dog* (Reprise) Almost too professional emo-alternative NJ 3 piece doing songs that deal with the confusion of human relations that might make a good soundtrack for a 20-something film. Depressing stuff that should definitely not be used as a mood elevator. - Tom B.

**LOVE IN REVERSE** - *I Was Here* (Reprise) Completely bland, middle of the road rock music. It reminds me of the cock-rock groups of the late 70s and the 80s. This really bored me a lot. - Paul S.

**LOVE HUSKIES** - *Semi Gloss* (Gotham Records, 1841 Broadway Suite 1012 NY NY 10023) Earnest, very earnest. The Love Huskies specialize in playing rock that sounds a whole lot like Soul Asylum. They look dashing and (need I say) sassy in their insert picture...no reason why they can't do a tour of dingy bars on college campuses and impress the ladies with their charm and war stories. Bonus points if they remember to bring their guitars. - Mike F.

**LOVE RIOT** - *Maybe She Will* (Squirrel Boy Records, 1177 Branham Ln. #247, Los Angeles CA 95118) A+ music, C+ lyrics. Love Riot's greatest strength is that they take tried and true rock progressions and give them new life. The music has this instantly familiar feeling, like you almost know what the next note is. The twist - the addition of violin and mandolin as more than just filler coupled with guitar-strong music. Mathews' voice ranks up there with the best new ladies of rock, but her words are lacking. The lyrics come across as never hitting the nail on the head, gingerly tiptoeing around what she can't (or chooses not to) come right out and say. This results in cheapening the otherwise impressive music. Overall, this is a good romance record needing a little boost of bluntness in the words. - Michael C.



LOVE HUSKIES

Photo by Jim Testa

**LOW** - *The Curtain Hits the Cast* (Vernon Yard Records) A beautifully relaxing and yet compelling record. The guitar - so simple but well-crafted - puts you in a peaceful state of mind and then they reel you in with tranquil, almost hypnotic vocals. The music's repetition does not detract from the experience; rather, it enhances it, taking you by the hand and walking you slowly through the most serene and simultaneously interesting soundscape you're likely to hear this year. There aren't a lot of parts or instruments for that matter, but there is a hell of a lot going on here - lyrically, musically, and spiritually. As perfect an "unwinder" as you can find. - Michael C.

**LUSCIOUS JACKSON** - *Fever In, Fever Out* (Grand Royal) - Although this has a loungier, more laid back vibe over all than their first album, "Naked" still provides ample proof that Luscious Jackson grinds out the best sexy groove-funk around. Mood music for torrid teens, or older listeners who just want to feel that way. - Jim T.

**LUV HAMMER** - *Luv Hammer* (Milk Records, P.O. Box 591853, San Francisco CA 94159) You'll find very little subtlety on Luv Hammer's initial full-length effort as the self-professed "power trio" roars and bullies their way through a dozen metal-tinged, slag-laden songs. There's plenty of muscle and molten steel to be found among the tunes on *Luv Hammer*, the band evincing a rather engaging sense of lyrical humour even while they're musically assaulting your senses with cuts like "Tarantino's Next Flick" or "Big Chrome Toaster." Although not exactly the good Reverend's "cup-of-tea," if you nonetheless prefer your rock & roll to bludgeon you over the head rather than slip, stiletto-like, into your consciousness, then by all means check out this self-titled debut from Luv Hammer. - Reverend K.

**LYNYRD'S INNARDS** - *Amscary* (Harmless Records) - Super fun punk rock with Simpsons out-takes. Really good. Well recorded and catchy riffs. These guys must be rad live. - Dave T.

**MAGNOLIAS** - *Street Date Tuesday* (TRG/TwinTone). John Freeman has been helming the Magnolias since the days when Twin Tone Records and the Minneapolis music scene still mattered. Scenes shift and times change (as do the other members of his band) but Freeman is a bright, shining constant, still churning out the same instantly-hummable garage-punk melodies in that same loveably snotty voice, with the same she-broke-my-heart lyrics. You could probably argue that Freeman's been making the same album over and over again since the mid 80's, but since every Magnolias song he's ever sung makes me smile, I could care less. I mean, you think I'm going to complain about one of the few things I can count on to make me happy? - Jim T.

**THE MAKE-UP** - *Destination Love: Live!* (Dischord) The rebirth of the Ulyssean aesthetic. Back when 3/4 of this band was still in the much-lauded Nation Of Ulysses, part of the fun was the whole call to arms in the form of the wordy record inserts the band was so fond of. It was rebellion and it was fun, even if people weren't exactly sure what they were rebelling against. Well, once again, Svenonius and Co., with their "Gospel yeh-yeh", make me wanna be involved, even though I'm kinda thinking it's all a schtick. Gamboa, Carty and Mae provide a perfect rockin'/spiritual bass/drums/guitar-sometimes-keyboards background for Svenonius's possessed babblings, sermons and screams (think Prince on that song 'Kiss'). The Make-Up, admittedly, are performers...seeing the band and their outfits live is part of the fun, to be sure (ask me about almost getting kissed by the singer during a show in Providence). To live boldly and to walk the shining path of righteousness indeed.... - Mike F.

**MAN WILL SURRENDER** - *Five on the Dime EP* (Equal Vision Records, PO Box 14, Hudson, NY 12534) Is Equal Vision Records still Ray Cappo's "Krishna-core" label? The lyrics here, while not overtly Krishna-centric, certainly have positive, politically correct leanings. And the music is melodic post hardcore. A few of the songs kind of reminded me of the late, great Bhopal Stiffs, only slowed down several notches. A few others kind of sounded like a heavy Social Distortion. Pretty decent sounds. - Paul S.

**CHRIS MARS** - *Anonymous Botch* (Bar None) Fairly banal, slick, pop music of a top 40 styling, with the possible exception of the rock-synth-tango track, "Sheep Spine Shimmy," and "The Weather," which is pretty cool and hard to describe, except that it sounds like a spooky gypsy rock tune. Kinda boring, overall. (Especially for someone who used to drum for the Replacements! - Ed.) - Paul S.

**THE MARSHES** - *Fledgling* (Grass Records, 72 Madison Ave., 8th Floor, New York, NY 10016) So, is this poppy punk, or is it fast, powerful pop? Probably some of both. The Marshes blur the border between pop and punk so much and do such a good job at it. Just when you start thinking, "yeah, this is a punk tune," they lighten things up abit. Then you think, "oh, this is pop." Then they get fast and heavy. In their heavier, punkier moments, they have a sound not too unlike Bad Religion. - Paul S.

**MAXIMILLIAN COLBY** (Whirled Records, PO Box 5431, Richmond, Va. 23220) I listened to this thing three times, and I am still not sure what I think. The beginning of the release gets off to a painfully slow start, as each of the opening few tracks takes far too long to get moving. However, once they did, the music seemed redundant in an attempt, and a vein one I point out, to sound bizarre. The vocals, which were always screamed, were buried deep into the mix with the rhythm section dominating the record. It reminded me of a bad imitation of Drag City bands, only that the bands on Drag City attempt to make art out of noise. It felt like Maximillian Colby were trying too hard to be bizarre, and therefore, the record did not flow. There were moments of inspired heaviness and originality in which the band whipped up a series of chaotic interludes, let them spin wildly, and then at the last possible second, brought them back in without causing much damage. When the anger is authentic, Maximillian Colby can be a very dangerous, possibly explosive, band. Yet they have to refine their sound a little. The heavier segments went off like bombs and made perfect backdrops to the psycho-killer vocals. However, there are still too many things wrong early in the album. The latter half saves it, and I for one, would like to hear more of their work. - Rich Q.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY** - *Independent* (Idjits Records, PO Box 20300, Tompkins Square Station, NYC, NY 10009) *Independent* is a disc full of driving, aggressive hardcore/hard rock which borrows a bit too much from metal influences at times. When Maximum Penalty stay away from the metal vocals and riffs, they are an impressive unit. The members here have been a part of the New York hardcore scene forever, and their experience shows. While not all of the songs work, the playing is much tighter and more impressive than the majority of the hardcore attempts you will hear. These guys obviously have given a lot of thought to what they say and what they sound like. Maybe that's the problem. I say this because for a band with so much talent and history, they fall flat too often, although I did like this release far more than an earlier 7-inch. Maximum Penalty crank out solid hard rock, occasional hardcore. I'm not sure what is holding them back. I really wanted to like this more than I did. - Rich Q.

**MELIAH RAGE** - *Death Valley Dream* (Backstreet, 61 Bernis st., Terryville, CT 06786) This is the band's 3rd studio recording, since their birth in 188. I remember back in 189 or so, I saw their poster in a metal mag. I never got in to them though. But now, I've had the pleasure of receiving their new one, and it's great! Hard music, with melodic yet aggressive vocals. It's bands like this that are keeping the "metal underground" alive. - Phil P.

**MELT BANANA** - *Scratch Or Stitch* (Skin Graft, PO Box 257546, Chicago IL 60625) Frenetic Japanese spazzcore with squawky shevox. Uhm, I've heard better. That KK Null guy is on here somewhere. An Albini "recording". - Des Jr.

**THE MERMAIDS OF GRAVITY** - *The First Second* (Vernon Yard Records) This record features the talents of former members of Medicine and Jane's Addiction with Velvet Undergrounder John Cale producing. Fuse the above names with a genuine zest to sound like a band born twenty-odd years too late and you've got The Mermaids of Gravity. Reminiscent of those great 70's B-sides, The Mermaids' strength is their songwriting. There's an instant familiarity with the rock they play, like you almost know what the next psychedelic measure is going to be. Buy it if you wished they never stopped making acid rock. - Michael C.

**METAL MOLLY** - *Surgery for Zebra* (Silvertone Records, 137-139 West 25th St., 11th Floor, New York, NY 10001) Cool, quirky mix of punky power pop, smoother indie pop, and heavier stuff. Good production values, good music, and a bit of a sense of humor make for good listening. - Paul S.

**MIGRAINES** - *Shut Up!* (Sick Duck, PO Box 5051, Ft Wayne IN 46895) Not unlike their neighbors Sloppy Seconds, the Migraines are a bunch of Midwestern fatsoos weened on bratwursts 'n' beer, playing punch-in-the-gut punk. Other similarities to Sloppy Seconds abound. The record rocks and sounds great thanks to Maas Giorgini's productin, but everyone should probably be warned about the ridiculous lyrics. "I'm gonna blow up Elvis, it'll be real neat, it'll rain down jelly donuts, cuz you are what you eat." - Johnny P.

**M.O.D.** - *Dictated Aggression* (Futurist) Is this the same M.O.D. from back in the day? Now they sound like 25 Ta Life (or is that vice versa?) I don't like. Sorry. I guess graduating from Sixth Grade made me feel different. - Rich H.

**MODEST MOUSE** - *Interstate 8* (Up Records) Cool slide guitar and harmonics are in full effect on this, one of the weirdest records I've ever gotten for review. I'm alternately reminded of Shudder To Think and the Talking Heads at times, as the songs move along with both alacrity and wacko male/female vocals...and then this Palace-sounding song comes

on all pretty and turns into a hip-hop ditty...and then this other one comes on, sounding all *emo* (and nothing like those two bands I already mentioned...dammit!). All of the changes in style and genre, I found, were seamless, not at all forced or contrived. This will take many, many listens to fully digest and appreciate, but I don't even mind. - Mike F.

**THOM MOORE** - *Spitting Songs* (Def Khan Records, 2440 16th Street, #326 San Francisco, Ca. 94103) For those of you who were a part of, or fans of the Pasadena, Ca. music scene during the late 80's/early 90's, this disc should bring back some memories. *Spitting Songs* just gives the rest of us a glance at what it sounded like. Moore was a part of such Pasadena bands as the Plumps, Orange Kate, Rubber Band and more recently, Lord Escalator. This is a collection of his work with most of these bands, which is primarily lo-fi acoustic stuff. There is a heavy Beatles influence here in which Moore adds a hypnotic sense of rhythm to his brand of playing. The songs are extremely well written with poignant, interesting lyrics and well delivered vocals. While Moore does not a staggering voice, he does a unique style that is tough to describe but somehow holds your attention. I liked this. It must have been fun to have seen these bands back in their formative stages. - Rich Q.

**THE MULTIPLE CAT** - "Territory Shall Mean The Universe" (Zero Hour 14 W. 23 St., New York, NY 10010) I've been waiting for this album since I heard their summer release, "The New Marcus Aurelius" 7". Just as I suspected, these guys ARE as eclectic as the 45 suggested. I am not disappointed. The Cat are hard to nail down. What is obvious is that these guys are wholly competent musicians who totally love to play. If you want to talk comparisons, we can go from The Cure to the Stones, Pixies to Supertramp, and from Sonic Youth to Metallica... okay, I'm joking about Metallica, but the point being, these guys are not operating under any contrived idea of who they should be as a band, they just do what feels good and what agrees with the policy of rock-n-roll. There is some honest rock experimentation going on here and it'll definitely make you want to dance. - Greg M.

**MY POCKET ZOO** - "Crawdaddy Craw" EP (Ming Entertainment, PO Box 285, Fredericksburg VA 22404) Inoffensive pop jangle with lots of early Beatles influence, "Beatles" meaning George and Ringo this time around. They mix in some noise and samples, probably to make this play more modern, but it's still so retro that you'd be forgiven for mistaking them for a cover band during Happy Hour. - Jim T.

**NAKED AGGRESSION** - *Live At Gilman* (Vinyl LP) (Mighty) Fifteen songs of fuel-driven punk rock. It broke my record player. Some things hurt so good. - Rich H.

**THE NEIGHBORS** - *We Refuse To Kiss Ass* (The Neighbors, 11383 Surco Dr., San Diego, CA 92126) These guys mix the early 1980's hardcore sound of bands like Circle Jerks and the DK's and the current Cali pop-punk thing.

What sets these guys apart from bands like Pennywise and Face To Face is the singer Kenny's pissed off punk ass fuck vocals and break neck thrashing guitars, which most of the current crop of Cali punks have lost and moved closer to the poppy side of things. The Neighbors are a really fun band that deserve your attention. By the way if your interested in this CD or record, be sure to look for the cover of the ugliest ass you've ever seen (at least I hope so!) in your entire life. - Rick K.

**NEUROSI** - *Through Silver In Blood* (Relapse/Release) Just when you thought every band with any kind of street credibility and notoriety had signed to a major, one comes along and goes in the opposite direction. Although its a bit difficult for me to comprehend exactly why Neurosis didn't stick with Alternative Tentacles in the first place, I'm sure they have their reasons. Structurally, these guys haven't changed their sound that much from their previous full length, but the songs here are definitely more difficult to digest, with a repetitive quality. There is a TON of pure noise mixed in the music and lyrically, they've gotten more obscure than ever before. For a person like myself who has such an incredibly short attention span, it was pretty damn hard to digest this 70 minute epic in one sitting, but somewhere in the midst, I was subjected to the most ugly, earthshattering brutality I've ever witnessed. Anyone interested in their more ambient and extreme offerings, should check out their always creative and impressive TRIBES OF NEUROT ofshoot!!! - John L.

**NEW BOMB TURKS** - *Scared Straight* (Epitaph) What to say about the Turks? Well, as I'm reviewing this disc, I'm using my roommate Austin's stereo, which has preset EQ levels. "Scared Straight" sounds best on "rock, live". Go figure, huh? This is straight-up dirty rock and roll that sometimes moves a million miles per hour with no frills or pretense. When it's a bit slower, it still kicks my lame ass. I feel like everyone in the world (but me) has already heard all of the records by these guys...if you haven't, you'd be well advised to check 'em out. - Mike F.

**NEW SWEET BREATH** - *Demolition Theater* (Ringing Ear, 9 Maplecrest, Newmarket NH 03857) This talented trio comes courtesy of Ringing Ear, the label that's home to Sinkhole and Doc Hopper. NSB combines elements of both, mixing pop-punk catchiness with *emo* vocals and crazy bits of guitar effects. Throw in rampaging drums, furious tempos, and really aggressive playing and you get 14 tracks that pummel you with ideas and innovations while you're bobbing your head and smiling. - Jim T.

**NO KNIFE** - *Drunk on the Moon* (Time Bomb Recordings, 11 West 57th St., New York, NY 10019) Nothing terribly original here, but palatable. The record is full of guitars riffs that chug along with a solid rhythm section. When the band changes the tempo, things seem to slow down too much. Some of the tracks sound as if they were stuck in mud and the band is attempting to play their way out. The majority of the work here wants to zip along quickly, but the band just cannot maintain a steady intensity. Songs like "Habits" are a highlight for it cranks along while displaying the bands chops. No Knife reminded me a little of bands like Babe the Blue Ox in a sense where they can blow a room away when they want to, but they just do not do it enough. - Rich Q.

**N.O.T.A.** - *Give 'Em Enough Rope* (Unclean, PO Box 34627, San Antonio TX 78265) None Of The Above definitely comes to mind when describing this CD. Loud, raunchy, crunchy, fast garage-punk rock just flowed out of my CD player when I pressed Play. Anybody got any Advil? Aleeve? - Rich H.

**NY LOOSE** - *Year of the Rat* (Hollywood) The follow up to 95's "Loosen Up" EP - NY's Lower East Siders crank out attitude-laden poppy punk. Brijitte West's vocals are trashy and emotional and raw with an underlying sensuality and backed up by Stiv Bator's old guitar player, Danny Nordahl. Enough production to make it radio friendly without making it suck. The film "The Crow - City of Angels" features the track "Spit." - Tom B.

**NO REDEEMING SOCIAL VALUE** - *Rocks The Party* (SFT, PO Box 56471, College Point, NY 11356) The kings of party-core are back with a little harder edge and Paul Bearer-type vocals X 2!! Recommended cuts: "Chicken," "ASPCA," "Your Boyfriend's A Guido," and "Fabio." The disc also includes four live tracks where NRSV play at Wembley Stadium. Kick ass!! - Rich H.



**NEW BOMB TURKS**

Photo by Shawn Scallen

**NRA - Access To Surf City Amsterdam Only** (OffTime Records, P.O. Box 52114, Houston TX 77052) Hard-core from Holland? Slam dancing in Amsterdam? The international appeal of punk rock has never been more evident than on NRA's *Access To Surf City Amsterdam Only*. A collection of sixteen rocking cuts taken from the Amsterdam foursome's three full-length European releases, NRA's style is best described as a aural blitz of thrashy punk riffs and power pop influence. While songs like "Another Day At Work" or "In A Free Land" cut to the bone with white hot guitars and pounding percussion, tracks like "Hard Boiled" are endearingly goofy, providing a lot of sloppy rock & roll fun. With the better part of a decade of performing under their collective belts, NRA still manage to bring ■ fresh, original perspective to the old dog that is punk rock, the band well deserving of a wider stateside audience. - Reverend K.

**OBLIVIANS - Popular Favorites** (Crypt) Just can't let it go, huh? Just as predictable, pretentious, and unnecessary as any of those Discharge cover bands. The cover has a bunch of shaggy-haired, mustached, stoner-looking types on it. Caveat emptor. - Paul B.

**OMAHA - Accident** (Doghouse) Impressive musicianship from this 90's post hardcore, hard edged rock outfit. The music is well played and its obvious these guys are quite creative, its just that the songs weren't too catchy and the structures were a bit too busy for my liking. The trademark Bob Weston drum sound is ever prominant here and proceeds to drive me up the wall once again. Traces of Shellac and newer Jawbox can be found amidst the driving rhythms and complex fills. Is this Doghouse's first attempt to appeal to a different audience? - John L.

**ONCE HUSH - Say It Anyway** (Fine Tune Mgmt, PO Box 4039, Lutherville MD 21094) Sturdy American rock with a rootsy core that reminded me of the Band. That's a high compliment indeed. It's only when the band's hippie vibe - that bluesy drawl so beloved of white male singers with facial hair - started creeping in that I started tuning out. - Jim T.

**ONE GOOD EYE - Let Go My E.G.O. (One Foot)** This band's got too many influences for me to pigeonhole them, but the closest thing I can come up with that's blatantly obvious is Jawbreaker or Garden Variety and things of that heritage. One of the better "undiscovered" bands out there, definitely underrated. Buy this record. - Paul B.

**OUT OF ORDER - Eye Caramba** (Theologian Records, P.O. Box 1070, Hermosa Beach CA 90254) "Who would of thunk it?" asked my old buddy, Sammy the Fez, when talking about the current popularity of ska among the alternative nation. As an aging geezer-man who can recall with some vibrancy the glory days of the "two-tone" movement, it warms the cockles of my heart to see these youngsters ranking full-stop to punk-injected ska rhythms. With *Eye Caramba*, their third album, Hermosa Beach's Out Of Order deliver the goods with a fair degree of élan, mixing hard-core punk with Jamaican beats and a little jazz improv in the creation of their own energetic and unique brand of "ska-core." What separates Triple-O from a legion of stylistic copycats, however, is a certain social consciousness that infects their lyrics. Not afraid to tackle questions of racism, class differences or the mindless violence that often mars the punk scene, *Eye Caramba* shows that Out Of Order has a big heart as well as a rockin' soul. - Reverend K.

**OVERWHELMING COLORFAST - Moonlight & Castanets** (Headhunter/Cargo) It's been two long years in the waiting and let me tell you "Moonlight" is well worth the wait! Bob Reed is back with a whole new line up featuring Aaron from MTX on drums and they sound better than ever. Three minute pop gems with Bob's smooth ass vocals. So if ya missed out on last years Sourdough ep, or if you've just been hankerin' for a powerpop masterpiece, look no further it's here. - Rick K.

**PENPAL - Best Boy** (Evil Teen, 67 Irving Place, NYC 10003) A new (but not all that young) NYC three-piece playing swirl Britpop-flavored indie rock. The lyrics are evocative and often enchanting, sometimes even hooky, and the melodies are both familiar and fresh, like all good pop music. While

some of the tempos border on the shoegazerish, I found myself coming back for another listen again and again. Recommended. - Jim T.

**PERFECT - "When Squirrels Play Chicken" EP** (Medium Cool/Restless) Surprisingly good EP, with raucous pop songs from ex-Replacement/Bash & Pop Tommy Stinson, with the exception of "Miss Self-Esteem," which is more of a ballad. The EP closes with another damned annoying "hidden bonus track" that you have to fast forward to or suffer several minutes of silence. And it's a cover of an old Elton John tune. - Paul S.

**PISS DRUNKS - Alcohocaust** (Ransom Note Records, PO Box 40164, Bellevue, Wa. 98015) Very raw, rough punk with howling vocals and choppy musicianship. This reminded me a lot of early scum rock like the Nosebleeds or Da Willys. As tough and drunken as this is, somehow the band can still produce the occasional catchy melody. They have enough skill to slash away and create interesting stuff that keeps your attention. Their version of Blood Sausage's "Hate My Life" is just amazing, and blends in well with their original material. There a ton of bands that either sound like this, or attempt to sound like this, but that is fine with me. I love this kind of band. Buy this, get some friends over, drink a lot of cheap beer and listen to Piss Drunks until you pass out. - Rich Q.

**PIST ON - Number One** (Futurist) Hetfieldish vocals, midtempo Sabbathoid metal, guitar solos that usually go against the grain of the songs, and harmonies (?!) that are somewhat psychedelic. All that and a lousy band name to boot. Isn't this the label that Tad bombed out on? - Des Jr.

**PLACEBO (Caroline)** "Punk pop for postponed suicides?" What? Who do they think they're fooling? This is the guy from Rush singing in (sigh) yet another "alternative" band. Only Rush had more originality coursing through their veins. - Paul B.

**PLEXI - Cheer Up** (Sub Pop) Well, they don't sound as poofy as they look. *Cheer Up* is sort of a Joy Division Meets My Bloody Valentine trio that hail from Hollyweird and look like the Cure. My question is whether or not that's Dave Navarro on the inside of the sleeve. They thank him in the credits and one of them looks just like him on the inside photo. The record does rock in sort of a Euro-midi style but it's way too washed out and portentous for me. - Johnny P.



PREMA

Photo by Shawn Scallen

**PLOW - Ice Cream Flares and Rocket Sounds** (Hat Factorym Records, PO Box 41343, Baltimore, MD 21203-6343) Loud shoe-gazer music is kind of the best way to describe this. It's loud wall-o-guitar indie pop music, but it's really laid back, introspective sounding. At times it was too laid back, and it was hard to hold my concentration on the music. It's too difficult for me to spend alot of time concentrating on music like this, but it's really good in smaller doses or as background music. (Not to be confused with the band *Plow United* from Pennsylvania. - Ed.) - Paul S.

**POP SICKLE** - (O/Z Records, 4756 U. Village PL NE #469, Seattle, WA 98105) Catchy pop-punk. Now how many times have you read that! These guys are different, though. If you like pop-punk get this one. It's catchy. - Greg M.

**PORK** - *Slop* (Emperor Jones Records - BOX 49771 - AUSTIN - TX 78765) Hmm... "Slop?" How about "Sloppy?" This band gets an A for effort, but lacks the musical foundation that makes a band sound good. I listened to each song, waiting for the drum beat to change...and lo and behold, the same drum beat appears on each song! This made the disc maddening to listen to. The guitar is real sloppy too, just not up to snuff as far as I'm concerned. This band just needs to spend more time in the practice studio and tighten up their sound a bit. Taken as a whole, I do not like *Slop* but taken as individual songs, there are some cool tracks on here. My favorite was "I'm Sexy," a song suffering from a severe case of the "Cramps." Twangy and sleazy sounding, pseudo surf rock. "I'm Sexy" is definitely a cool song. Like I said though, taken as a whole the CD suffers from poor musicianship and just isn't that good. There is potential in this band, but it is seemingly yet to be realized. - Chris D.

**PREMA** - *Drivel* (Equal Vision) Prema draw heavily from my two favorite post-hardcore scenes -- San Diego and NYC. Unfortunately they don't go too far out of their way to expand on those sounds other than a couple really bad nouveau-folk tracks. (Trying to get signed to Rev guys?!) Thankfully "Hair Dye" and "Supine" make up for those abominations, respectively experimenting with jazzy and slo-core signatures. Prema almost have the drive of Jehu or the depth of Quicksand, but not quite. Okay on record, okay'er live. - Shawn S.

**PROPAGANDHI** - *Less Talk More Rock* (Fat Wreck Chords) - Can you say, best album ever released? Yes, this fucking rocks. Political activism through music. Punk rock is the resource, Propagandhi are the real thing. Get this. Read this. Be exposed. Unbelievable. I need more! - Dave T.

**PRY** (Temperance Records, P.O. Box 685 Northfield, New Jersey 08225) Tough, aggressive and definitely hard, yet smooth at the same time. The members of Pry do not have to pose throughout this record - the sincerity of what they do bursts through in the creation of some powerful as well as textured music. Most listeners will remember Jim from one-album legends Burn, and other members have played with acts such as Die 116. At only four songs, you are given the briefest of introductions to this band, but you will be left craving more. Pry understands the proper use of speed and tempo changes to create songs with personality without sounding forced. An overall solid effort and a promising beginning for this band. - Rich Q.

**PSYCLONE RANGERS** - *Beatin' On The Bat Pole* (World Domination, PO Box 8097, Universal City Station N. Hollywood, CA 91602-8097) This here's the new EP from those nutty guys from the city of otherly love; rattlin' out some more of their patented brand of psycho-billy-punk-rock-n-roll. Four new tunes and two covers, one D. Boon song and one Jeffery Lee Pierce tune. The Psyclone Rangers, by the way are as fun live as they sound on this CD! - Rick K.

**PULLEY** - *Esteem Driven Engine* (Epitaph) Pulley features members from Face to Face, Ten Foot Pole and Strung Out. This was a project done among friends for fun. It is also what you have come to expect from Epitaph. In other words - catchy, poppy punk with far too much melody. You have heard this stuff a billion times before, yet with the line-up this band featured, I was expecting big things. This was a major disappointment. - Rich Q.

If my memory serves me right, these guys are Ten FT. Pole minus Scott on vox. He was too busy pitching with the Chicago White Sox and these guys wanted to do it full time. Straight forward melodic punk with a Bad Religion written all over it. Over all not bad, but like Bad Religion, many of Pulley's songs begin to sound like one long ass song. - Rick K.

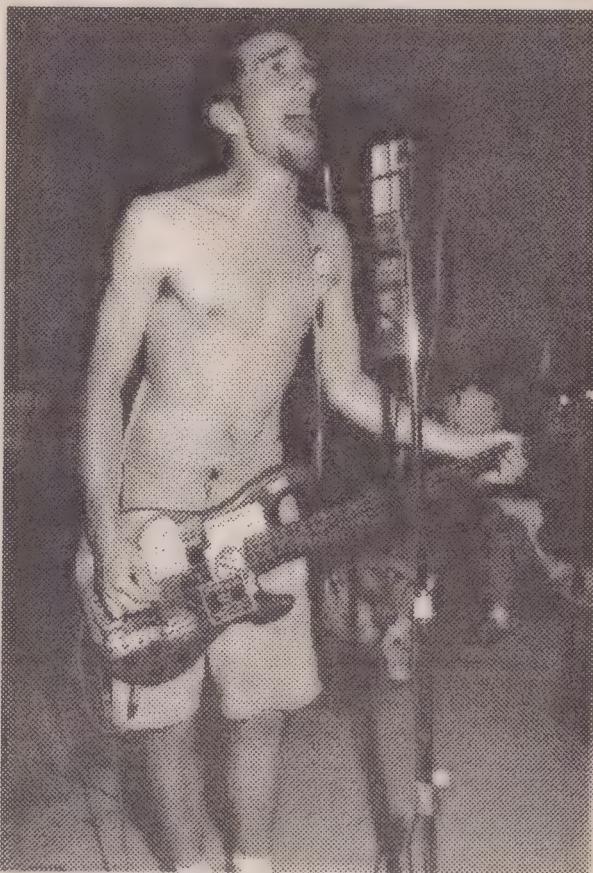
**PULSARS** - *Submission to the master* (Almo Sounds, 360 N.La Cienega Blvd. Los Angeles, Ca. 90048-1925) The Pulsars play moody, brooding songs that all seem to crawl along at the same pace. You will want to listen to this with the lights out. It has an atmosphere to it, but I just could not get into the musicianship. The Pulsars are exclusively a two man outfit with a handful of backing musicians helping out. David and Harry Trumfio rely heavily on programming and keyboards. Unfortunately, they do not take these instruments and techniques into new territory. The brothers are not able to establish a clearly defined direction on this CD, just an assortment of songs that did not move me. - Rich Q.

**RACHEL'S** - *The Sea and the Bells* (Quarter Stick Records, PO Box 25342, Chicago, IL 60625) This, the third album from Rachel Grimes and friends, is, in my opinion, their best yet. It flows more smoothly and seems less stiff

than "Egon Schiel." Not to say that "Egon" was stiff, but this feels a little less confined. The music is beautiful, energetic, mysterious, experimental; all the things that make music exciting and interesting. - Paul S.

**THE RAYMOND BRAKE** - *Never Work Ever* (Hep-Cat, PO Box 17022 Chapel Hill, NC 27516) This Greensboro North Carolina band has that loose quirky-melodic guitar sound that the Archers do so well. What set them apart from the Archers or even Polvo isn't a whole hell of a lot, but if you dig the Chapel Hill sound as much as me, you'll dig the Raymond Brake as well. - Rick K.

**REBEL TRUTH** - *Everybody Hates Everybody, Nobody Loves Anybody, We're All Gonna Die!* (Grand Theft Audio-501 W. Glenoaks Blvd Suite#313 Glendale, CA 91202) This is the first of these Grand Theft Audio comps that I've had a chance to hear, and if it's any indication of the label's quality, then these guys are doing some outstanding work. This disc collects demo, 7" and live tracks from Sacto punks Rebel Truth. They were fairly obscure to me with my knowledge limited to a MRR comp track. This retrospective shows a strong socio-political conviction over a hardcore yet semi-psychadelic musical delivery. Very cool and a valid history lesson as well. - Des Jr.



**PROPAGANDHI**

Photo by Shawn Scallen

**RED AUNTS** - *Saltbox* (Epitaph) I missed out on 94's #1 *Chicken*, which I heard kicked major booty. These four Los Angeles area chicks play herky jerky punk tunes in that old LA punk fashion, with lots of attitude and kick. Definitely one of better Epitaph bands on their ever growing roster. - Rick K.

**RED ROCKET** - *July* (Excursion) Oh wow, fireworks! Oh, its a CD... with fireworks!! Wait a minute... POW!... There goes my finger. Now I only have four fingers to type this review. Lots of songs with supercharged pop punk spirit. Like Serpico, etc. - Rich H.

**REEL BIG FISH** - *Turn The Radio Off* (Mojo) Hugely entertaining horn-driven ska. Two trumpets and two trombones provide the brass; the vocals are nimble full of fun, with lyrics about everything your typical punk loser

runs into - posers, vegetarians, girlfriends who'd rather date other girls, beer... "Sellout" captures every nuance of every argument you ever heard about why bands shouldn't sign to a major label (Mojo is a sub-subsidiary of MCA Corp.), "Join The Club" captures the utter futility of trying to start a band, and "Alternative, Baby" is just the most brilliant synopsis of what it's like listening to this kind of music: "Well, I see you up on stage and I just don't know what you're sayin', but you're my hero... and somebody just kicked me in the head." - Jim T.

Wacky Ska punk that is fast, loud and funny. Fave cut? "She Has A Girlfriend Now" - Des Jr.

**REJUVENATE** - *To the Extreme* (Free Spirit Records, PO BOX 1252 Madison Sq. Station N.Y.N.Y. 10159-1252) Heavy hitting New York school of hardcore with a heavy Sabbath/later C.O.C metal guitar sound and vocals way too loud in the mix. Angry, distrustful lyrics shouted over an abundance of mosh parts. Pretty good musicianship inspite of the simple song structures. 6 studio songs including an Agnostic Front and Bad Brains cover plus a live set from Coney Island High of decent enough sound quality. - John L.

**REPLICA** - "E.P. One" (Replica, PO Box 29604, Los Angeles, CA 90029-0604) Reminds me a little bit of Mission of Burma. Strummy guitars and modal keys do that. Vocals are kind of goth-like female vocals. Overall, an interesting release, but it seemed to lack a certain amount of energy. - Paul S.

**REX** - C (Southern Records, PO Box 25529, Chicago, IL 60625) Soft, soothing, indie-pop. One song is fully, beautifully orchestrated, "C". "Jubin" has a cool twang to it, utilizing banjo, though it isn't a country tune. It still has great fuzzy guitar. Most of the songs have a sparse instrumentation, and the very "present" engineering makes for a clean sound. Nice stuff. - Paul S.

**RHYTHM PIGS** - *Baby Falcon Getaway* (Cool Beans! 3181 Mission #113 SF, CA) This is the first I've heard out of these guys in many moon. They were (to me anyway) a hot 3 piece along the lines of, say, NoMeansNo or Victims Family. I saw them with DOA in '86 and they smoked. Plus, the singer dude acted quite the character. Then they seemed to fade. I don't know if this is the "comeback" but I do know it finds the band in fine form. Brisk scatcore stomp with stream of consciousness lyrics. This disc shows broad scope, from the snarlin' "Ass Bitin' Dog" to the twinkly "A Song Called Amy" thru the Mingus cover and back again. And despite the horrid cover of "Sundown," the song "Hollow Body" is one of the best "perils of a musician" song of the '90s. An excellent release. - Des Jr.

**ROSEMARY CAINE** - *Foolisher Than Pride* (89 Mass Ave #234, Boston MA 02115) "I'll drive you home in my Toyota Corolla, let's have some fun," sings Drew Bancroft on Rosemary Caine's debut CD, epitomizing the simple charms of this light, airy, feel-good CD. Years ago, singer-songwriters like Jim Croce and Harry Chapin wrote songs that made housewives smile while they listened to the radio over their ironing and cooking. They called it "kitchen radio music." Well, this is kitchen radio music for Generation X - songs about dating and making out in the back of your mom's old car, and how great it feels to fall in love, and how weird life can get sometimes. With its blend of strummy guitars, a bit of banjo, violin, and mellotron, Rosemary Caine's jangly pop is guaranteed to induce grins and sighs. To wit: "I kissed your neck and smiled... it was a yummy day." Awww. - Jim T.

**AMY RIGBY** - *Diary Of A Mod Housewife* (Bar None) Amy Rigby - formerly of NYC's Shams and the Last Roundup - knows from writing perky country-rock from a city girl's point of view. On this clever concept album, Mrs. Will Rigby (the onetime dB) devotes her considerable assets (including a lovely, full-bodied voice and a bevy of talented pals, from Yo La Tengo's Ira Kaplan to her hubby) to juggling a career with real life concerns like motherhood, matrimony, and balancing a family budget. There are more rock 'n' roll moms out there than Bob Dole would care to admit, equally adept at changing diapers as changing guitar strings, and Rigby captures their day-to-day travails with loving detail and a generous sense of humor. - Jim T.

**RUTH RUTH** - *The Little Death* (Epitaph / Deep Elm) Fairly non-descript, yet reasonably catchy power-pop, with the exception of the last track, "Daddy Can't Shoot," which is slow, white-boy rock and roll rap, and is kind of boring. There's nothing really exceptional to recommend this release. It's not a bad disc, but it's nothing I would go out of my way to buy, either. - Paul S.

**SAMAEL** - *Passage* (Century Media, 1453-A 14th St. #324, Santa Monica, CA 90404) DAMN! This kicks! I never heard any style like this, so I guess the best way I can describe this, is as "Progressive Death". Very melodic like Dream Theater and Savatage, but with a hard edge, like old Kreator as

**SATCHELL** - *The Family* (Epic) Just when Seattle was getting over *Singles*, along came *Sleepless In Seattle*. When they almost lived that down, along came Satchell. A little (very little) Joe Cockerish at times, and a little Counting Crows, and hey, whaddayaknow! It's produced by Stone Gossard. Oh well, then these guys are great! Quick, be the first one in town to say you were into them before anyone else knew who they were. - Paul B.

**SATISFACT** - *The Unwanted Sounds Of...* (Up, P.O. Box 21328, Seattle, WA 98111) Sounds a lot like 80's English new wave, especially in the vocals. They've even got a synthesizer player. A CD that would have been much better off in another time on another continent. - Jon C.

**SATURN'S FLEA COLLAR** - *Monosyllabic* (Alternative Tentacles) Saturn's Flea Collar feature two members from the semi-successful punk/funk outfit Victim's Family, and are obviously heavily influenced by psychedelic comedy bands like Alice Donut and Ed Hall. (With song titles like "Don't Fuck With the Guy Who Makes Your Food," what can you reasonably expect?) On the other hand, the songs are all relatively short and feature lots of quirky time changes, both of which are good things. But the fact of the matter is that unlike some of the elements that made Victim's Family what they were, Saturn's Flea Collar in no way takes themselves seriously, and that can get old real fast. This does have some interesting aspects, and could probably morph into something much more interesting with a small dose of seriousness and artistic integrity. - Dan E.

**SCARCE** - *Dead Sexy* (A&M) MTV-ready "alternative" rock. Very slick, very commercial, very boring. - Paul S.

**SCHLEPROCK** - *(America's) Dirty Little Secret* (Warner Brothers). It doesn't really bother me that much when bands I like sign to a major, so long as they remain true to their sound (e.g. Rocket From The Crypt, Meices, Green Day). But this Schleprock major label debut really bothers me. Once an outstanding SoCal melodic punk band ala' Adolescents, D.I., etc., they've totally shifted gears and now play Rancid/Bouncing Souls/Swinging Utters 80's revival street-punk with the most cliched lyrics and riffs imaginable. They've even adopted tough guy fashion and posturing, as evidenced by the band photo on the inside cover. The whole package just reeks of a major label deciding they need a Rancid on their roster and convincing a naive punk band that they can make it big as a Rancid clone. The thing is, this record will only alienate their existing following, get them dropped from the label, and spell the breakup of a once credible band. - Jon C.

**SCREECHING WEASEL** - *Bark Like A Dog* (Fat WreckChords) After months of rumor & supposition, they're back - Ben Weasel, Jughead, Vapid, and Panic, the last (and most stable) Screeching Weasel lineup, and it's like they never left. Ben is still writing viciously accurate odes to adolescent angst and singing them in that wonderfully snotty voice, those catchy Screeching Weasel riffs still dance around the sturdy 3-chord Ramones-ish changes, and the choruses will have you singing along on the first listen. The excellent, full-bodied production adds even new dimensions to the traditionally lo-fi Weasel sound, like barrelhouse organ on "Cool Kids" that captures that Sixties garage rock feel Ben's always dreamed about. Loud, obnoxious, and funny, this ranks right alongside *My Brain Hurts* and may even be the best Screeching Weasel LP yet. - Jim T.

**SEBADOH** - *armacy* (Sub Pop) The clever title comes from a Pharmacy sign with a missing "P", a photo of which is on the cover. Good thing the music isn't as cheesy as the title. I hadn't been exposed to Sebadoh before this, although everyone had been buzzing about them awhile ago. And you know what? I like them. This is more alternative pop than anything else, but it still manages to sound fresh. I'm listening to the track, "Mind Reader" right now, which kinda reminds me of the Fall a little bit, mainly due to vocal style. The styles of the songs aren't stagnant, so the songs don't all sound the same, either. - Paul

**SECONDHAND** - *Droppin' the F-Bomb* (Motherbox Records, 60 Denton Ave., East Rockaway, New York 15181/Geriatrics Records P.O. Box 586 Monmouth Jct. NJ 08852) I've always respected Motherbox Records as a label that consistently released cool stuff, and had the ability to weed through the thousands of "punk" bands out there, and only deal with real talent. I hate to boast, but I'm right again. Secondhand, while not as intense as some other Motherbox releases (i.e. Violent Society), play relentless hardcore with a well crafted mix of melody and speed. The members can clearly handle their instruments, and the vocals are gritty but decipherable. The band obviously has respect for what they're singing about. The guitar here is what really stuck with me; it tears through the heart of each track without ever dominating the sound. The quality of the recording is excellent, plus they rip through a speedy version of the Cure's "Boys Don't Cry", and a very special unlisted bonus track (all Repo Man fans will recognize it

and a very special unlisted bonus track (all *Repo Man* fans will recognize it instantly). The disc comes out of the gate a little slow, but halfway through, the band finds its stride and creates a record definitely worth picking up. - Rich Q.

SERPICO - *The Weakest Boy In The Troop Award* (Excursion Records, P.O.Box 20224 Seattle, WA. 98102) This CD is almost a Serpico primer. It's a collection of all the band's singles, reflecting different stages of the group's recording career, neatly packaged on one CD for your convenience. This is a complete collection, for it goes back to the bands' 1990 debut, on which they were known as Sleeper. If you're familiar with Serpico's pounding yet melodic hardcore, and just couldn't find all the 7 inches, you're in luck. If you're new to the band, this is a good place to start. Cool liner notes and complete lyrics round out the disc. I like Serpico a great deal, and so I was not disappointed with what I found here. I still say they sound better on vinyl though. - Rich Q.

SERPICO - *Rumble* (Equal Vision.) I haven't heard these guys since they changed their name from Sleeper, which I think was a couple years ago. Anyway, as Serpico they have greatly improved, it seems they are a hell of a lot tighter and way more focused. They seem to have concocted their very own brand of popcore, with serious nod to old DC bands such as Scream and Dag Nasty as well as ultra catchy riffs and vocals a la Big Drill Car. So all you little east coast popcore kiddies who think all the good bands are out there in Cali, well a lot of 'em are, but Serpico are right here in New York. So do yourself a favor and pick this up and check them out live. - Rick K.

SHATTERPROOF - *Signal Flare* (Fort Apache/Gravel Records, Two Tyler Court, Cambridge, MA 02140) This three-song CD EP has three different sounds on it. The first song has a very ordinary alternative rock sound: slick and overproduced. It left no impression on me. The second track showed a lot more promise, with more of a bouncy, poppy feel, and some excellent hooks and melodies. This song "Going Nowhere" suffered from too slow a tempo; it made it feel like the band had a low energy level. The third and final track, though, left me really cold. It reminded me of the worst of the 70s rock ballads. And, unlike most discs these days, which improve with repeated listens (even if they're not that good), this disc seemed to bother me more on a second listen. - Paul S.

SHPLANG - *Journey to the Center of Mirth* (My Daily Creation, 1146 N. Central Blvd. #356 Glendale, Ca. 91202) This was almost indescribable. Shplang produce moody, transient, atmospheric music... sometimes. The band is the creation of two multi-talented men with very diverse musical

interests. On paper, I would have loved this - but I guess that is why you actually listen to the disc before you review it. The songs, all of which were recorded on a four-track, range from almost ambient to Psychedelic Furs-style rock. This just did not hold my attention, as much as I wanted it too. Lacking the sheer noise brutality of some Japanese noise acts such as Mezbow, or the ability to mix rock with noise, Shplang just fell flat. The fact that they referred to themselves as an "ensemble" was also a little unnerving. Nice try guys, but sorry. - Rich Q.

SHUGG VS. COCKPIT (Bittersweet) The second in Bittersweet Records two-CD sets introducing new bands. This time around it's ladies night; two all-gal bands. Shugg does the retro-New Wavey thing, with giggly vocals and bouncy Blondie beats, and cheesy Sixties keyboards. Cockpit is all screech and flail ala' L7. Have fun. - Jim T.

SIN 34 - *Die Listening* (Grand Theft Audio, 501 W. Glenoaks Blvd., Suite 313, Glendale, CA 91202). I remember seeing a fun little Super 8 movie about this band tacked on to a Flipside video compilation back in about 1983, but then I never heard anything about them again until I got this CD. Apparently, they never did much except release a few tracks on compilation albums and play a few shows around the L.A. area before breaking up in the early 80's. This CD collects their few comp. tracks plus a bunch of demo tapes and live performances, and the result, not surprisingly, is a large volume of poorly recorded and sloppily played punk rock. Still, it's not without its charm. There's plenty of hooks and plenty of youthful energy, especially from female vocalist Julie. - Jon C.

SISTER PSYCHIC - *Catch and Release* (Y records, PO Box 20241, Seattle WA 98102) Nerdrockers rejoice! A band has come to leadeth you into holy ground and its name is Sister Psychic. Among some deliberately lightweight fare (ie. "Garden" and "Make Me Nervous") are some genuine ear-catchers ("Groove" and "Draw With Erasers"). Every now and then the lyrics could use some inspiration, but the music, which takes chances with experimentation, more than makes up for it. Wow! Proof that nerdrock isn't totally discardable! Let's hope Sister Psychic drives the rest of the geeks out there beyond their mindless powerchording. Check it out. Michael C.

SIX VOLT SUNBEAM - *Sur La Table* (Extra Strength Records, 2802 East Madison #113, Seattle, WA 98112) The first track alternates between a Naked Raygun style punk sound and a lighter pop sound. Another track blends a surf style with a Buzzcocks kind of new-wave punk. Styles of songs stray back and forth between post-punk and pop, which keeps it from



SERPICO

Photo by Shawn Scallen

getting stale. "Fairfax Kid" is a fun track, with a punked-up Western ballad feel to it. Not a bad disc. - Paul S.

SLEEPASAURUS - *It's All Written Down And I Still Don't Feel Any Better* (Creep/Motherbox, 60 Denton Ave., E. Rockaway NY 11518) Eleven blasts of fast and catchy Descendents-style pop/punk that I enjoyed from start to finish. Dig it. - Jim T.

SLEEPER - *The It Girl* (Arista/BMG) This band owes a heavy debt to the Britpop of the 60s, as there is a most definite influence there. Imagine merging modern pop with the mod sound of the 60s, and you'll have a good idea of this sound. It's kind of a sparkling, bouncy, sound, and it's really infectious. Good stuff. - Paul S.

SLEEPY - *I Could See The Moon* (Extra Strength Records, 2802 East Madison #113, Seattle, WA 981112) Lots 'o guitar, never a quiet moment. But this isn't heavy stuff. It's pop. Angst-filled vocals abound. It sounds good, but every song tends to sound like every other song on the album. It got to the point that I couldn't really tell when one song ended and the next one started, except for the silent part between them. - Paul S.

SMART BROWN HANDBAG - *Monkey In the Middle* (Stonegarden Records, 3101 Exposition Pl., Los Angeles CA 90018) Trendy, modern pop rock; fun music for "mature" tastes. The sad thing is that they sound like they could push the envelope a little more. This style sounds like something they settled for. "This Dance is Free" and "Thin Shoulders" hint that the band has so much more to offer, but the artsy-fartsy vocals/lyrics and the goofy-yet-stylish guitar-based music displays a band that's pretty easy to ignore. - Michael C.

THE SMEARS - *Like Hell* (Headhunter/Cargo) This album teeters on the brink of collapse at every second...the Smears, it seems, don't have very much command over their instruments. It's the element of imminent danger that makes this record, with its basic arrangements and larynx-shredding grrrl screams, such a great listen. After each and every song, I sat shaking my head, wondering how the band managed to stay together. Wonderfully sloppy and fist-in-the-air punk rock. - Mike F.

SNFU - *Fyulaba* (Epitaph) Another SNFU release, just in time for the cold months of Canadian beer and hockey. Fyulaba, as far as they're Epitaph releases are concerned is the best and most consistent, it combines the right amount of pop hooks and hardcore crunch and of course Chi's twisted ass wacky lyrics. Although D may never become as popular as they're label mates Rancid, they outshine just about any other band live I can think of, so be sure and catch Chi and the boys when they roll through your town this year. - Rick K.

SNUFF - *Flibbiddydibbiddydob* (Fat WreckChords) Odd batch of covers (including, 1OCC, Four Tops, GBH) with a couple of originals, all delivered in that superquick Snuff style. Damn good. - Des Jr.

SOCIAL DISTORTION - *White Light, White Heat, White Trash* (550 Music) Reviewing this can be a test due to the baggage that comes with a band like Social D. I'm old enough to have been fan when they first came out - they even did a benefit for my school's radio station. Lately, I've read that Mike Ness has slagged his punk roots and made the obligatory guest appearance at a Rancid show, and SD even opened an arena show at the Meadowlands (blah.) But when you get right down to it - the music still has the old SD sound, loud and hard, and Mike still sings like he has not found what he's looking for. SD's paid its dues and if they are finally getting some recognition - good for them. They still beat the hell out of the Dookie swill that's out there. - Tom B.

SONNY GEORGE'S ROCKIN' COUNTRY AND WESTERN ROUNDUP -*Volume One* (Hermitage Records PO Box 8523 Hermitage, TN 37076) Being from Nashville, I have always hated country music more than anyone outside this city could ever fathom. If you've never been here, you can't imagine what sort of demonic filth this industry brings along as baggage. It's not as much the music, (though 99% of the stuff that is sold as "country" music to a world of unsuspecting "country music" fans is overproduced, slicker-than-owl shit garbage created by marketing execs who wouldn't know real country music if it kicked them in their collective genitalia, which is why most people say that they hate country music- they haven't heard the real thing) as the people who pull the strings. I know that this is not just country music, but that all major label people are ignorant fucks with their heads so far up their asses that they're in danger of imploding. I see them all of the time in the place I work, and I'll never get over hearing these fucks refer to an artist as product. Which was the case with this particular CD. I nearly came to blows with an asshole from a label over the quality of this CD. I was actually told by him that if nobody bought it, it wasn't quality. The buying public decides what is quality. Because this is a self-released

album, and distribution is almost only word of mouth, then by his rationale, it ain't quality. This is REAL country music, with guts and heart and soul and IT ROCKS! It kicks the ass of just about everything that is spoonfed to the public as country music. This wouldn't be out of place on the early Sun records roster, rockabilly in its purest form. Twangy country and the big beat of rock and roll and rhythm and blues. And Sonny is an old hand at rockabilly. He fronted the legendary Planet Rockers, and former Planet Rocker/current Los Straitjacket Eddie Angel makes a couple of guitar appearances on here. With the recent resurgence in the more traditional sounds of country (BR5-49, The Mavericks), and the rise of what is called (BLECCHHH!) "alternative" country (Son Volt, Paace, Scud Mountain Boys, Wilco), I hope Sonny finds his niche. This is really an exceptional album, and it deserves to be heard. - David B.

SONS OF HERCULES - *Hits For The Misses* (Unclean Records, P.O. Box 34627, San Antonio TX 78265) Any disc that opens with a Stooges-styled rave-up like "Spittin Fire" is okay in my book. That the Sons Of Hercules manage to sustain that kind of manic energy level throughout the entirety of *Hits For The Misses* - burning through cuts like "Used To Be Cool" or "Ground Zero" with a fervor reserved for madmen and true rockers - places them on the steps of Mount Olympus in my mind, ready to join the pantheon of punk rock gods. These Texas boys redline it from start to finish, every one of the fourteen songs on *Hits For The Misses* guaranteed to fry your eyebrows, jar your sensibilities and, best of all, please your ears. The Sons Of Hercules aren't content to merely genuflect at the shrine of folks like Iggy or the New York Dolls, they're doing a damn fine job of building a legacy of their own. - Reverend K.

SPACKLE - *Strange Like You* (Royal Goddess Records, 9095 Picasso, St. Leonard, Quebec, H1P 3J3 Canada) In a nutshell, this is indie pop/rock, blended with white Canadian funk. And a magnificent blend, it is. It grooves, it rocks, it pleases. And the inserts are printed on what appears to be shiny gift-wrap. Get this now. - Paul S.

SHPLANG - *Journey to the Center of Mirth* (My Daily Creation, 1146 N. Central Blvd. #356 Glendale, Ca. 91202) This was almost indescribable. Shplang produce moody, transient, atmospheric music... sometimes. The band is the creation of two multi-talented men with very diverse musical interests. On paper, I would have loved this - but I guess that is why you actually listen to the disc before you review it. The songs, all of which were recorded on a four-track, range from almost ambient to Psychedelic Furs-style rock. This just did not hold my attention, as much as I wanted it too. Lacking the sheer noise brutality of some Japanese noise acts such as Mezbow, or the ability to mix rock with noise, Shplang just fell flat. The fact that they referred to themselves as an "ensemble" was also a little unnerving. Nice try guys, but sorry. - Rich Q.

SPEED MCQUEEN (Necessary Records, 676 Broadway, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10012) Firstly, the name had me a little skeptical, as I was fearing some kind of generic metal thing. Instead I was greeted with this generic, terribly bland, lifeless AOR-style rock. Yawn. There was some decent guitar work, but it was no way near thrilling enough to save this floundering effort. There was no attempt made to forge their own niche here, just a collection of songs that were usually dragged out for too long a period of time. Do not give this to a friend. - Rich Q.

SPEEDBALL BABY - *Cinema* (Fort Apache/MCA Records) Distorted vocals over primitive rock music with a "punkabilly" aesthetic. Raw rock and roll that has "party time" written all over it. This isn't serious musical literature, but it is enjoyable. - Paul S.

SPENT - *Seat Beneath The Chairs* (Merge) There are lots of reasons to love Spent. First, how many other tres' cool indie-rock bands live in Jersey City, and actually brag about it? Secondly, how many can boast three uniquely talented singer-songwriters in the same group? Guitarist Annie Hayden, with her breathy Julianne Hatfield-meets-Georgia Hubley voice, serves up delicate pop songs from the feminine perspective; John King, the group's resident slacker poet, writes slop/rock masterpieces that chug along with Superchunky abandon while piercing your heart with his oh-so-winsome boyish charm and disarming sincerity; and bassist Joe Weston provides the requisite dose of Prozac, all bummed-out dirges murmured in an indie-rock approximation of a basso profundo. But even Spent's liveliest songs resonate with a certain sadness; this twenty-something quartet perfectly captures the lowered expectations of its generation. No anthems, no angst, just straight-from-the-heart pop songs, exquisitely rendered. - Jim T.

SQUAT - *It's all Over* (New Red Archives) Upbeat, tuneful, and often sloppy punk thots fairly enjoyable but nothing new or groundbreaking. The vocalist wins punk points for sounding like Kathleen Hanna. Imagine if Bikini Kill played more straight forward, by the numbers punk rock with a beefier

guitar sound. Back cover photo wins even more punk points for showing one of the members taking a dump on the toilet. Beavis and Butthead would definitely approve. - John L.

**SQUIDBOY** - *Kids Talk to Killers* (Allied Recordings, P.O. Box 460683, San Francisco, CA 94146-0683) Squidboy cranks out true, driving indie-rock without the pretentiousness that often surrounds indie bands. The vocals here have a true Drive Like Jehu feel over the top of wildly swirling guitars. Somehow, the band produces timeless riffs mixed with garage band purity in the midst of all the chaos. This is the kind of band that you would love to be in. No other way to describe this one: just basic, loud, riff-happy rock that you will fall in love with, or consider yourself soulless. There was absolutely nothing that I did not like about this release. Go buy it... these guys are too good to have day jobs! - Rich Q.

**STEEL MINERS** - *Irony* (Double Deuce Records, PO Box 515, NY, NY 10159-0515) Roaring out of blue-collar Pittsburgh, PA comes this blue-collar garage band. The Steel Miners play pure garage fury with traces of everything from hardcore to rockabilly influences. The sound here is generally one of distortion, especially on the vocals, which gives this disc that gritty, dirty garage feel. This trio bashes out their brief songs with Nineties softness combined with a rock earnestness that hearkens back to the Fifties. I would kill to see these guys live, for their energy should be awesome. There is a real New Bomb Turks sound here, which I adore, so I fell for this instantly. Like most garage acts, they do not vary their sound very much from song to song, and they certainly are not trying to change your life through their lyrics. However, if you just want to blow out the speakers on your stereo, go for the Steel Miners. - Rich Q.

**STRYCHNINE** - *Dead Rats And Oakland Dogs* (East Bay Menace Records, East Bay Menace Records, PO Box 3313 Oakland, CA 94609) Balls out aggro crust-punk from Oakland. Nothing I can really say except they fuckin' rip! I gotta see these guys live when they come out east. - Rick K.

**STUCK MOJO** - *Pigwalk* (Century Media, 1453-A 14th st. #324, Santa Monica, CA 90404) This is the group's sophomore effort. It's way better than their first, I think. They have a better direction and sense of focus this time around. They're a pretty good act live too. The back-up vocals are cool as fuck. And the lead vocals, hip-hop hardcore; it's just insane. Actually the vocals kinda sound like the guy from Cypress Hill, but to the 10th power on the intensity side. - Phil P.

**SUB ZERO** - *Happiness Without Peace* (Too Damn Hype, PO Box 1520, NYC 10276) Ah, this feels good! Some good ol' NYHC to soothe the soul and ease the pain of life. One complaint: The music sometimes overakes the vocals. Fave song: "We All Fall Down." It has that Slayer chugga-chugga riff. Also some of the later songs are more metal than hardcore; it makes me feel like I have long hair and an Iron Maiden shirt on. Weird! - Rich H.

**SUBSONICS** - *Everything Is Falling Apart* (Get Hip! Recordings PO Box 666 Canonsburg, PA 15317) Brand new elpee from Atlanta's answer to the Velvet Underground. And I mean that in a good way. I love VU, and these guys do to. A lot. I haven't seen these guys live in awhile, but from what I remember, they only kind of sounded like VU. They always had that drone, that jangly guitar, but now they sound like Lou Reed came in and showed them how to record an album. Imagine VU with a punker, almost Cramps-like delivery, throw in some primitive tribal-like drumming, and you're almost there. The first time I heard a song off of this record on the radio, I thought I was hearing an unreleased VU song. But lo and behold it was the Subsonics. Quite a surprise, but I guess I should have seen it coming. This is still a great record, and one I recommend you buy. And if they happen to stagger into your town, make sure to catch 'em live. They are truly one of the most amazing live bands that I have ever seen. Damn near a transcendent experience. - David B.

**SUCKERPUNCH** (510/MCA) '77 punk'n'roll that sounds an awful lot like DGeneration. If you dig that sort of thing, you will probably enjoy these retropunks as well. - Rick K.

**SUPERGRUB** - *Norma & Thurselle* (Creep Records, Suite 222, 252, E. Market St. West Chester, Pa. 19335) Supergrub has an unfortunately lame name, but they combine occasionally rough metal, flashes of punk aggression and a rap-style vocal into one swirling mix. Unfortunately, it comes up flat. I just could not feel true intensity within this record, regardless of the barking vocals and metal guitars. In the end, you feel more bored than invigorated by this band. Like they sing in the track "Someone Else", it's "time to start again". The band needs to rethink their approach a little and create something different. - Rich Q.

**SWANK** - *[Bound]* (Whirled, PO Box 5431, Richmond VA 23220) Happy ska-punk tuneage, with horns. The tempos rock, the horns add a nice touch, the vocals are lovably inane, and the whole thing is happily free of those overused diggada-diggada ska cliches. Stop the presses, here's my blurb: 'Swank - guaranteed to make you skank.' - Jim T.

**SWEET BABY** - *It's a Girl* (Lookout) I guess there is a pretty good reason that Lookout reissued this excellent forgotten pop punk record from 1988. It definitely had an influence on a great deal of bigger pop punk bands that are in turn influencing todays youngsters. Sweet Baby (aka Sweet Baby Jesus) were first heard as one of the stand out acts on the 'Turn it Around' double 7" compilation put out by Maximum Rock and Roll. Somehow they got hooked up with a larger label who pushed them to college radio and somewhere along the line, they called it quits. This LP became somewhat sought after although the songs weren't nearly as good as their compilation cuts. This CD is for those who missed out the first time. Solid guitar punk, saturated in harmonies with a definite early Descendents, M.I.A. and Ramones influence, and plenty o' songs about girls. Good stuff. - John L.

**SWEET DIESEL** - "Search & Annoy" (Go Kart/Soundviews, PO Box 20, NYC 10012) This 6 song CD is a split release between Greg Ross' Go Kart Records and Lee Greenfeld's Soundviews fanzine. I can't think of two other people who have done more to promote what is quickly becoming a very lively NYC scene again, and there's certainly no better band to epitomize that scene than Sweet Diesel, the poster boys of Nineties crunch rock. Sweet Diesel pack the wallop of NYC/HC with the enthusiasm, energy, and good spirits of classic pop punk. It's fast, it's hard... but it makes you smile instead of wanting to smack somebody in the face. Wanna support the scene? Start right here. - Jim T.

**SWIM** - *Bodhisattva* (Tigeride, 7 McGinnis Rd., Edison NJ 08817) 3-man groove-funk combo (formerly with the unspellable Indian name they've used as the title for this cd.) heavy on the wah-wah and growly bluesy vocals. The lyrics and presskit stress the band's search for enlightenment, but the music says, Light up a bong and dance, dance, dance. - Jim T.

**TALKING TO ANIMALS** - 4 song EP (Q-Division/Sony) Boston's Talking To Animals is a showcase for Juliana Nash's sturdy stentorian vocals, but I'm never been a fan of dressing up classic rock in goatees and buzzcuts just to make it seem "alternative." Alternative to what? Janis Joplin? Grace Slick? They had great voices too... but they also sang songs you remembered for long than it takes to hit "Eject." - Jim T.

**THE TECHNICAL JED** - *The Oswald Cup* (Spinart) These guys are about as subtle as a body cavity search. Track one hits you over the head with their style, track two comes in as tranquil as a vivisection, track three lullabies, and track four reminds you that your alien abduction experience is far from over. The Technical Jed is a dark outfit that knows how to use guitar music as both anesthetic and bone saw. Their songs want to be experienced rather than just listened to. The Technical Jed is abrasive and talented and worth checking out. - Michael C.

**TEEN IDLES** - *Dischord 100* (Dischord) You'll get no complaints on this one. Like the liner notes say, this is not being released because the music is amazing or essential, but because it's funny and cool. This 7" finds Ian MacKaye and Jeff Nelson in their pre-Minor Threat punk/hardcore heyday, letting loose on some raw, angry, youthful music with a surfy instrumental to get the ball rolling. As energetic and powerful as can be for 1979. Cool cover art and a great way to celebrate Dischord's 100th release, which is unfortunately a lot better than some of the clunkers they've put out in the past 2 years. - John L.

**TEX WAGNER** - *Rumble and Squawk* (Damnear Music c/o Tom Semoli, 401 E. 86 Street #10M New York City NY 10028) OK, picture this... a small, hot, smelly club, with a cloud of smoke so thick you barely make out the band playing on stage. Yet you don't need to see who's playing, you can just feel what's going on. That's the kind of band Tex Wagner (pronounced like the composer) is. This Texas-meets-New York outfit bashes out some rootsy-cum-Replacements rock n' roll with wild abandon. The six songs on *Rumble and Squawk* have true appeal, with solid musicianship free from any needless labels. The second song on the disc, "Really Real," sums up the mentality of this band and their music. They cite people from Richard Thompson to My Bloody Valentine as influences, but don't even pay any attention to that... Just turn this sucker up loud! Stu Richards delivers great earthy vocals over the top of some pretty slick guitar playing. Three of the songs feature Jennifer Amlen on lead vocals, and she truly shines. While they did get a little too cutesy on one tune "The Rain Came;" that is the only weak moment. The other songs simply rock, and you can just taste the Tex-Mex barbecue coming through your speakers on the last two tracks. This will be mandatory listening for a while. - Rich Q.

**THIRST** - *Through the Wire* (Iguana Records, 30 Glenn St., White Plains, NY 10603) Very slick, very commercial, self-styled "alternative" music, complete with faux angst-filled vocals, a la Bono. Though they label themselves as "alternative" (though they claim to be reluctant to use labels), this is less "alternative" sounding than a lot of what pops up on commercial radio these days. The musicianship is very good, as it is with most of the slick sounding bands out there. But slickness and technical skill can't make up for a lack of originality or honesty. - Paul S.

**THORAZINE** - *Crazy Uncle Paul's Dead Squirrel Wedding* (Hell Yeah, ) A definite contender for dumbest name for a CD, but someone went to a great deal of trouble to outfit the squirrels. Old style 80s upbeat punk with lots of energy, hooks and a female lead. When she's not crooning such gems as "I'm Not a Whore," JoAnn Rogan acts as the band's manager and fends off challenges from the manufacturer of Thorazine for copyright infringement. - Tom B.

**3 PENNY NEEDLE** - *Brand New Worries* (Nu.Millenia Records, 10585 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90025) Really lame, slick, commercial pap. Turn on the radio to any commercial rock radio station and you'll hear something that sounds just like this. - Paul S.

**THROWING MUSES** - *Limbo* (Rykodisc) Beautiful, sad sounding pop music. "Serene" is particularly nice, using cello and vocal overdubbing to provide harmonies. "Tango" has a late-period Beatles-esque quality to it, giving it a haunting feeling. Nice. - Paul S.

**THUMBNAIL** (Headhunter/Cargo) Emo style voice and git over a Touch and Go style rhythm section. That may sound ugly, but it's actually rather good. This is a remix and re-release from 1994, so I'd like to hear more and newer stuff. Check 'em out. - Des Jr.

**THE THUMBS** - (Sneezeguard Records, 301 Annapolis St. Annapolis, MD 21401) Being one of the few punk bands in the Baltimore area the Thumbs really pack in the kids and good reason why. They're great! Extremely melodic punk with guitars weaving in and out of each other, lots o' fun sing alongs and heartfelt lyrics. Any fan of melodic punk will want to go out of their way to pick this puppy up. - Rick K.

**JOHNNY THUNDERS** - *Have Faith* (Mutiny Records, P.O. Box B, New York, NY 10159-000B) If you haven't heard of Johnny Thunders I wish you

would please be so kind as to put this magazine down and get lost! This is prime Thunders material. Recorded in Tokyo 3-years before his death, this 12 song punk rock reference piece will make a great addition to your collection. It's easy, just keep it between Sid Sings and the Dead Boys. Have Faith is perhaps the best quality live recording of Thunders that has been released. Includes "Too Much Junkie Business", "Personality Crisis", "Chinese Rocks", and "Born To Lose" as well as the honored covers, "Play With Fire" and "Pipeline". This is what I call Retro. - Greg M.

**TIZZY** - *Befriend Us* (Pop Narcotic) The Pop Narcotic label sinks to new lows by releasing shoddy pop songs about hated suburbanites and insincere daddies that sounds like a bad Mary's Danish ripoff. Why do I get the feeling Calvin Johnson could have pulled this off? - Dan E.

**TOASTERS** - *Hard Band For Dead* (Moon Records-POBox 1412 Cooper Station NYC, NY 10276) These U.S. ska vets are highly regarded on the circuit, but both this disc and the times I saw them live failed to make me believe. This particular disc strikes me as sterile and lounge-y. Only track 11, an alleged attack at the Dancehall Crashers, contains any real fury. I can not get behind this one. - Des Jr.

**TONE** - *Sustain* (Discord / Independent Project Records, PO Box 1033, Sedona, AZ 86339) Tone is a guitar ensemble. As such, there's lots of guitars on this. Thick guitar instrumentations that blend surprisingly well. Musically, this ranges from cool post-punk to Latin-tinged to surf-like stuff to fuzzy pop and back again. There's enough variety and good music to keep the listener from getting bored of the same kind of instrumentation on every song. Really interesting release. - Paul S.

**TRAVIS JOHN ALFORD BAND** - *Lucky Pierre* (World Domination) Overall, the songs on this disc have a poppy garage feel. A couple of songs have a hint of a punk edge, and at least one has a doo-wop feel. But in all of them, the energy level just doesn't seem to be there. At felt like things were dragging, like the band didn't get their Wheaties that morning or something. It just didn't excite. - Paul S.

**TREBLE CHARGER** (C/Z Records, 4756 U. Village Place NE #468, Seattle, WA 98105) The first cut, "Morale," reminds me a lot in places of Neil Young, and "Slight" has a late period Beatles-esque quality in parts. But for the most part, this is fairly non-descript alternative rock. I couldn't get excited about something that doesn't sound any different from anything else out there. - Paul S.



THE VAN PELT

Photo by Jim Testa

**TREE** - *Downsizing the American Dream* (Cherry Disc Records, P.O. Box 99024, Boston, Ma. 02199) This disc could blow up a building. Boston's Tree returns with their third and clearly most sophisticated work to date. They have emerged as one of the most talented and intelligent hard-core acts around today. Tree has taken an uncompromising look at the Earth and man's stupidity concerning its survival since their first release, *A Lot to Fear*. The songs on *Downsizing* continue those themes, and the songs here are delivered with a sense of anger and real urgency. Lead singer and lyricist River tackles topics such as the religious Right ("X-Communicated"), pollution ("Same Old Song Remains the Same,") and the manipulation of liberty ("Homefront"/"Liberty Stands Alone") without ever using clichés or becoming preachy. There is a brutal honesty to the music Tree produces, and even when the songs turn introspective, the band is baring its soul and not looking for forgiveness. The vocals range from melodic to nearly rap, but are always effective, for the music that backs them is consistently relentless. Tree continues to improve with each record, as well as being an unstoppable live act. Go out, buy this record, support a great band, and maybe even learn something. How often can that be said about today's hard-core scene? - Rich Q.

**TRUSTY** - *The Fourth Wise Man* (Discord) In spite of the horribly bland graphic layout and lack of lyric sheet, Trusty have developed a rather pleasant sound with their unique grade of innocent, fun, pop music. I liked all of their previous singles and full lengths and this disk is very cool too. Though they've never been too heavy or upfront in the guitar department, the attraction lies in their twisted, off kilter pop/rock structures and their notorious borderline out of tune melodies and harmonies. Occasionally I think I hear Fat Mike singing the songs, but the lack of over the top guitar overdrive gives me a quick reality check. Theres a few tunes on this disk that may stick in your head for a while. For me it was 'Candy' and 'Sean Tucker'. Well written and recorded, there may be no ground broken, but a real cool time nonetheless. - John L.

**TURMOIL** - *From Bleeding Hands* (Century Media, 1453-A 14th St. #324 Santa Monica, CA 90404) Maniacal bursts of anger fueled vocals and grinding guitars make up this Pennsylvania quintet's sound. Their music sounds like their name implies. - Rick K.

**TUSCADERO** - *The Pink Album* (Electra/Teenbeat) Sugary sweet bubblegum indie-pop from the nation's capitol. Female vocals and songs about love, latex, Nancy Drew, and of course Pinky & Leather. Sooo sweet it's sticky. - Rick K.

**UNION** - *In the Shadows* (Ferret Records, 72 Windsor Dr., Eatontown, NJ 07724) Buffalo-style HARDCORE! Heavy, new-school hardcore music, with plenty of shouted and growled vocals. Pretty decent. Not overly metallic, but metal tinged enough to satisfy today's straight-edge youth. - Paul S.

**THE VAN PELT** - *Stealing From Our Favorite Thieves* (Gern Blandsten) Chris Leo's vocals - half spoken, half sung - sound like a little boy sharing secrets. Shards of distorted guitars cross back and forth between the line that separates emo from art-rock. Oddly disquieting and utterly mesmerizing, the Van Pelt is one of the most original and striking acts to emerge from Jersey's punk scene in years. - Jim T.

**VERSUS** - *Secret Swingers* (Caroline) There's nothing jangly or bouncy about this. This is dark pop music, not happy, mindless stuff. It ranges from quiet moments with sparse arrangements, to full-on, wall of guitar fuzz. But it always has a haunting, dark edge to it. Versus continue to hold my attention. - Paul S.

**VIOLET BURNING** (Domo Records, 245 S. Spalding Dr., Beverly Hills, CA, 90212) Masters of atmosphere! This isn't so much great music as it is great art. The Violet Burning serves a variety of dishes: sometimes it's hypnotic distortion while the singer smoothly talks through pretty melodies, and sometimes it's eerie harmonies over crunchy guitars. They sound like they would play well to fans of My Bloody Valentine as well as fans of Nine Inch Nails, and they're poppy enough to probably snatch a few listeners from the top 40 market. People into "trancing out" would do well to pick up The Violet Burning. - Michael C.

**VISION OF DISORDER** (Roadrunner) Without question, one of the most unrelenting, vicious records I have heard in a long time. I was awe-struck by this band at a live performance, and I was both anxious and uncertain about this release, fearing that they could not capture their punishing live sound on tape. However, that was quickly destroyed seconds in to the opening track "Element". Vision of Disorder will slice the listener to shreds and mutilate your stereo at the same time. This is pure, brutal hardcore played with a sense of panic-stricken desperate intensity. These five Long Island natives have created a hardcore record for the ages, a collection of songs

that others will only hope to aspire to. Every track here just explodes like a bomb went off and does not quit. Articulate, well conceived lyrics accompany a pounding rythem section and scathing guitar work. If you do not own this, you will miss out on one the finest discs to come down the pike in a real long time. Oh, and by the way, see them live as often as you can! - Rich Q.

**VISIONSTAIN** - *The Miniature Pearl* (Silverdish, P.O. Box 612, Brockport, NY 14420). From the cheesy cover art, I was expecting metal. Instead, I got quirky indie-punk much like San Francisco's Pee. Nothing mindblowing, but still better than most. - Jon C.

**THE VOLUPTUOUS HORROR OF KAREN BLACK** - *A National Healthcare* (Soapbox/Go-Kart Records, P.O. Box 20 Prince Street Station, New York, NY 10012) A reissue of the first TVHKB album with the addition of two bonus tracks, "Chopsley: Rabid Bikini Model" and "Feeling Stronger". TVHKB sound a lot like 45 Grave only they choose to write songs concerned more with everyday people and events. Rockin' bitches that bite hard. If you get a chance to see this band don't you dare miss it. At worst, their stage show is a wild freaky ride of ultra-bizzare, underworld chaos. - Greg M.

**VOODOO LOVE MINT** - *Something In French* (Angry Seed, 2632 Stevens Ave. S, Mpls, MN 55408) Self described as "noise-pop," Voodoo Love Mint certainly deliver the promised goods on those levels. Their first album was produced by Tim Mac at Amphetamine Reptile, although their sound is much less serious than the majority of the Am Rep/Twin Tone Minneapolis bands. Imagine East Bay pop punk with crisper vocals, a hell of a lot more noise, and songs about castor oil (What do you expect from Minnesota?) The majority of the tunes here have the classic pop formula of a chorus, sing along vocals, etc., however they somehow manage to remain self-respecting by putting a little extra kick into it. Now all they need to do is get a new name. - Dan E.

**WAKE OOLOO** - *Stop The Ride* (Pravda) Like its two predecessors, Wake Ooloo's third album sounds like nothing so much as the Feelies reinvented as a garage band. Original Feelies Glenn Mercer and Dave Weckerman (ably abetted by keyboardist Russ Gambino and bassist John Dean) are still writing and singing true to form; Mercer shamelessly cops riffs and attitude from the Velvets and Neil Young, while everything warbled by the lovably ingenuous Weckerman sounds like it could have been done by his old Feelies offshoot-band, Yung Wu. What's missing are the pastoral motifs and folkie/country feeling of the last two Feelies albums. No longer preoccupied with the concerns of careerism and artistic ambition that weighted down the Feelies, these guys just rock, whether it's Mercer original like "In The Way," with its Stooges riff and frantic vocal, or the band's chaotic cover of "So You Wanna Be A Rock N Roll Star." - Jim T.

**WALKING RUINS** - *Fall Of The House Of Ruin* (Ruined, PO Box 1785, Bloomington IN 47402) The Walking Ruins is right! This is a totally crappy try at punk rock. These guys look like stand-ins for The Kids In The Hall. Excuse me, I have to go wash my mouth out now, I have a bad taste... ugh! - Rich H.

**WALLFLOWERS** - *Bringing Down The Horse* (Atlantic) Certainly by now you've seen them on VH-1 or heard them on AOR Radio and figured out the formula: slow, contemporary acoustic folk music with lots of harmonization and a heavy country twang. The Wallflower's most obvious (and most marketable) aspect is that Bob Dylan's son Jakob is on lead vocals, but get past that and you'll find a truly talented and sincere roots band. Sure, it's been done before, but the Wallflowers are quickly catching up to the competition and proving themselves to be among the forerunners of the country/folk genre. - Dan E.

**ILENE WEISS** - *Obliviously* (Gadfly) The group is known as Ilene With PMS, which is an amusing take on the names of the bass player, guitarist, and drummer - Paul, Marc, and Steve. Modern day folk songs which are mostly fairly amusing and well written and well performed. Very good stuff for those who enjoy this sort of thing. Half a dozen spins are enough for me. - Rodney L.

**WHEAT CHIEFS** - *Redeemer* (Bang On Records, 544-810 West Broadway Vancouver, BC Canada V5Z 4C9) This band is made up of three of the members from SNFU, led by Marc and Brent Belke. The record is certainly more hook happy and pop driven than SNFU material, but the Wheat Chiefs give the brothers Belke the freedom to experiment musically, and you realize just how talented these two are. Great guitar work and sharp, introspective vocals make this a hip departure from hardcore. The stuff on *Redeemer* is not complex. It is kept intentionally simple, led by a airtight rhythm section. There are moments here where the Wheat Chiefs become almost too accessible, and a little too arena rock. Still, I enjoy it when

members of any band try different things, and the Wheat Chiefs are a great outlet, and an opportunity to hear some gritty rock mixed with a real punk mentality. - Rich Q.

**WHIPPING BOY-** *Subcreature 1981-1983 The Fucked Years* (Grand Theft Audio) Does anyone out there remember these No. CA guys from the early 80s hardcore scene? I barely remember the name and recall bits of just one song. WB played with a host of famous bands in their heyday; Fear, Circle Jerks, Black Flag, etc. GTA is to be commended for putting out old stuff like this - but once you get to obscurities like this - whose buying this stuff? - Tom B.

**WHIRLING DERVISHES** "Grinch e.p." (Foundation Records, The Galleria, Building 3, 2nd Floor, 2 Bridge Ave., Red Bank, New Jersey, 07701) Just in time for the holidays comes this e.p. of basic, straight ahead, no frills rock. The Dervishes are steady and honest without forcing their sound. They keep their songs short, smack you hard and get out. The guitar playing sticks out, for it is speedy not sloppy and raw but not muddy. This is a band that has been kicking around for while without achieving a real level of success, and that's too bad. The highlight here is clearly their



## YO LA TENGO

Photo by Shawn Scallen

almost perfect rendition of the old Dr. Seuss gem, "You're a mean one, Mr. Grinch". All the whos in Whoville will love this e.p. - Rich Q.

**WHITEKAPS** - *The Endless Bummer* (Fearless, 13772 Goldenwest #545 Westminster CA 92683) Punk rock with a hillbilly twist is what we got here. Though the tempo on this CD's 16 tracks varies from that mid-paced pop-punk (that all the kids love) to that speedy Fat Wreck-ish feel (that all the kids love), this really doesn't do a whole lot for me, one way or the other. Maybe I'm getting old or something. - Mike F.

**WRETCHED ONES** - *Go To Work* (Headache Records) These hardworking and hard drinking NJ locals are back with their tales of blue collar lives

that suck. For longtime fans such as myself there's the repertoire of songs such as "Mind Your Own Business," "Up In Smoke," etc. - but about half of it is newer material in the same vein. These guys are not breaking any new ground, but they're great at what they do - Oi Oi! With lyrics like "I'm heading to the liquor store because I need more..." hell, I think I'll join them. - Tom B.

**THE WRONG CENTURY** - *Pages* (MDR, 680 No. Lake Shore Dr. #114, Chicago IL 60611) No matter what I say, you still won't understand how bad this is, but at least their friends will go see them play. - Paul B.

**STEVE WYNNE** - *Melting In the Dark* (Zero Hour Records, 14 W. 23rd St. FL 4, New York, NY 10010) A mixed bag. There's some really good, upbeat, punk-ish and garagey tunes, but there's also some really dull, slow tunes that would find a home on a lite rock radio station. - Paul S.

**X MEMBERS** - *Car Trouble* (Lethal Records, POB 5481, Fullerton, CA 92834) I think this 5 song EP, recorded in April '95, came before their *Down With The Average Joe* CD. I prefer this EP since it has less of a ska/pop influence and more of a harder edged, bluesy punk sound to it. Nice remake of "Tequila" - maybe too much of that behind the wheel leads to car trouble. - Tom B.

**X MEMBERS** - *Down With the Average Joe* (Priority Records) A somewhat all star cast from the Orange County HC scene here, with Cadillac Tramp's lead singer Gabby Gaborno leading this outfit along with Ray "Bones" Rodriguez, an old skate punk who helped pioneer the sport in the late 70s. I found the more melodic cuts such as "So Wrong" more appealing than others, but the themes of negativity and rejection were cool. I also liked the Oi songs and the band's sense of humor (like the song about getting one's lost penis back.) This is the third CD in the last few months I've seen with a picture of a fat guy taking a crap on the sleeve - have I just identified a trend I do not wish to see continue? - Tom B.

**XEROBOT** - *Control Panel* (Coat-Tail Records, PO box 607032, Chicago, IL 60660) Cross The Boredoms with Victims Family and you'll be close to the insanity this outfit produces. Very fucking odd and pretty cool as well. - Des Jr.

**YO LA TENGO** - *Genius + Love = Yo La Tengol* (Matador) A 2-CD set of outtakes, B sides, and fanzine-only singles, plus a few things that just happened in the studio and got caught on tape. The second CD is all instrumental and mostly self-indulgent waste of time, unless you have 26 minutes to kill for the mega noise-jam version of "Sunsquashed," or need to hear an acoustic lounge-lizard rendition of "Blitzkrieg Bop." But the first CD, which includes cameos from Hoboken stalwarts like Tara Key, Dave Schramm, and Jad Fair, is well worth the price of the set, if only to marvel at Georgia and Ira's ability to take virtually any style of music and make it uniquely their own. - Jim T.

**YATSURA** - *We Are Yatsura* (Primary Recordings / Che / Elektra Entertainment Group) No, this is not another Japanoise band. They're from the UK. They obviously have spent a lot of time listening to Sonic Youth, as that is the sound that most readily comes to mind while listening to this album. Lots of melodic mayhem. Thick mixes of guitar noise overlaid with melody, with an energetic base upon which to build. It's obvious that the band enjoys playing, something that seems all to lacking from a lot of today's bands, and this helps me enjoy it, too. - Paul S.

**ZEKE** - *Flat Tracker* (Scooch Pooch Records) - I can see why MRR likes this band but to me this is just plain 'ole RAWK. I mean, there's no need for motorcycle engines roaring in the background of songs like Hate, Bitch, or Eliminator. This band wants to scare us all but us Jersey kids know better than to listen to crap like this. - Dave T.

**ZEN LUNATIC** - *Eleven Days In May* (MGR Entertainment, 4 Accord Station, Hingham, Ma. 02043) This disc features straight-forward college rock with above average vocals and some tasty guitar licks. This entire record is brimming with radio-friendly hooks. The band thanks Bob Mould in their liner notes, I guess as an influence, and it is glaringly obvious from the opening track that Mould's solo work has affected these guys. Singer John Bickford relates painful stories à la Mould in songs like "All Tomorrow's Questions", "Get Me Down", and "Stay". As this disc went on, I started to like it more and more, and after two listens, I really dug it. It brought up bad memories of past girlfriends, but other than that, very cool. Zen Lunatic play an honest, blue-collar, long drive in your car kinda rock n' roll that can be good for the soul....of course now I can't get my ex outta my head. - Rich Q.

**ZUMPANO** - *Goin' Through Changes* (Sub Pop) While all the comparisons to 60's Brit-Invasion bands like Herman's Hermits and their ilk are

fine, Zumpano seems to cop more from those good all-American surf lovin' kids, the Beach Boys. Zumpano continues the brilliance and originality of their earlier work and builds upon it here, creating a plush, luxurious, dare I say *beautiful* record. The shining stars of the Sub Pop roster produce mesmerizing, unique, depression-free pop music that contains both originality and maturity. This is pop music for grown ups. I must admit, I owe much of this review to my pal Harley who has raved about this band for over a year. I finally heeded his advice, and I am fortunate, because Zumpano is a gem. This band brings a heightened sense of drama back to music that has been missing for oh so long, without becoming a cartoon. *Goin' Through Changes* is a collection of carefully crafted and well orchestrated pop perfection as composed by musicians who have a direction and refuse to waiver from it. What a wonderful change of pace. - Rich Q.

## COMPILATIONS

516 - A LONG ISLAND COMPILATION (None of the Above Records, P.O.Box 654 Farmingdale, NY 11738) Long Island a haven for hardcore? Who knew? While it may sound strange to some, one listen to this collection should convince you that there is more to New York hardcore than the city and memories of matinee shows. This compilation is a two disc collection that allows over twenty bands to be heard. This is a great idea, and anyone who has ever tried to release a compilation disc that represents an entire area knows how much of a nightmare these things can be, which is why I'll keep my criticism to a minimum. The majority of the bands here sound like they are comprised of young members with limited musical backgrounds or just recently formed outfits. The effort here is commendable, but the music at times is far too cliched, and the attempts at tempo changes are easily predictable. Did I hate this? No way - far from it. Considering the number of bands, this comp has a pretty diverse sound and seemed willing to take a chance. That is very cool, and is an example of what the hardcore movement should be about-support. You would figure that these bands must have a chip on their shoulders the size of Manhattan, playing in the shadow of the big city, and most of them do. The sound quality ranges from band to band and so does the ability and originality. However, this comp has a lot guts and integrity, with the feel of something thrown together by friends for the basic appreciation of music. For those reasons alone its worthwhile, even if some of the bands on it need time to develop. There were some impressive tracks here, don't get me wrong, for Glassjaw, Headkase, Man Down Alone, Outrage, Silent Majority, Tension and Splinterface all made me very excited about what they could do in the future. This was a bold move by None of the Above. I hope they keep trying. - Rich Q.

ALL FOR ONE, ONE FOR ALL - A Benefit for Roger Miret (Grand Theft Audio) Roger, of Agnostic Front fame, broke 3 lower vertebrae in his back a few months ago and GTA did this benefit for him - Roger is recovering fully. An excellent comp with 48 different punk bands - most of the bands are from the late 70s/early 80s. Some of the better known acts include RF7, Heart Attack, Raw Power, AOD & Bedlam. What I find most interesting is so many really obscure bands that broke up over a decade ago are now getting back together for reunion shows. I wish them all well, but who is target audience for this stuff? - Tom B.

ALL THE PUNK FIT TO PRINT (Newspeak Records 7095 Hollywood Blvd. #657 Hollywood, CA 90028) Fifteen tracks of some well known as well as some not so well known pop-punk bands, and skacore favorites Skankin Pickle. Featuring the likes of Lag Wagon, Bollweevils, Zoinks, Rhythm Collision and eight others. If you like comps and dig top quality pop-punk check this out. - Rick K.

ANARCHY FROM THE UK Vol I (Dojo) The late 70s and early 80s UK punk scene revisited. Twenty tracks by 20 different bands and almost every cut a good one. UK Subs, Sham 69, 999, Vice Squad, etc. If you're like me and over 30, this is sure to help you relive your youth. The only bad bands I don't

recall are the Defects and One Way System (whose "Jerusalem" is superb) All aboard the nostalgia train. - Tom B.

ANOTHER ROUND OF GOLF - (Golf Records, Unit 15 Bushell Business Estate. Hethercroft, Wallingford, Oxon. OX10 9DD, England) This comp comes to us from the English punk/hardcore label Golf and a hell of a comp it is! Six bands featuring the likes of Shutdown, Brainless, Amperstand, Capability Green, and Funbug. Stand outs on this comp are Shutdown who would easily give any American emocore band a run for their money. Amperstand who are the English Dag Nasty, and Funbug who write extremely infectious pop/punk gems reminiscent Mega City Four. - Rick K.

ANTI-MATTER (Another Planet Records, 740 Broadway, New York, NY, 10003) This compilation is generously brought to us compliments of Norm Arenas, formerly of Sheller, now in the brilliant Texas is the Reason. However, prior to his involvement in those bands, Norm was the creator/editor and all around everything behind a great fanzine called Anti-Matter, and this compilation highlights bands that Norm featured in the zine. It is pretty impressive line-up, ranging from the well known (CIV, Snapcase, Quicksand) to well hidden talent (check out the Threadbare song). There are sixteen big tracks on this disc, and to Norm's credit, he has found bands that are similar yet different. This is an undeniably great hardcore comp, but its true appeal comes from the fact that the bands span the map of hardcore musical avenues. Some of the standouts are Farside, 108, Strife, and Chamberlain (formerly Split Lip).

You also get treats from Mouthpiece, Garden Variety and Sense Field. Overall, a very worthwhile compilation, and a celebration of diversity. - Rich Q.

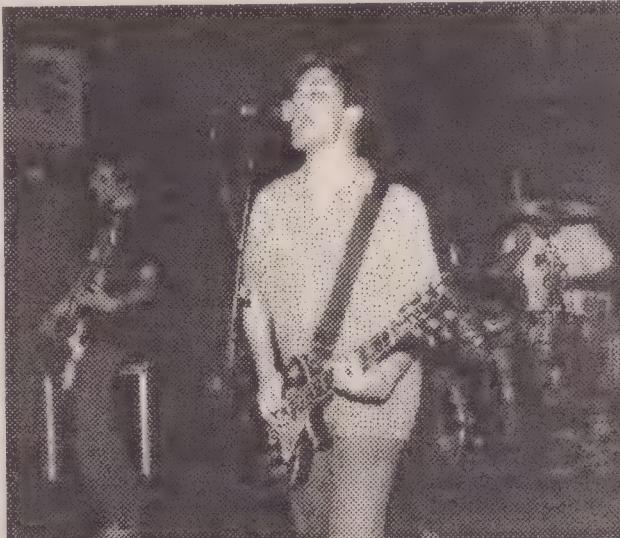
BETTER READ THAN DEAD (Epitaph) A 22-band benefit compilation for AK Press, which publishes and distributes literature about anarchy. The standout names include No FX, Tribes Of Neurot (Neurosis side project), Napalm Death, Spazz (amazing track: "Might Morphin Power Violence,") Zoinks, J Church, and Propagandhi. An awesome disc for an awesome cause. - Rich H.

BLINDSPOT MAILORDER SAMPLER (Blindspot Mailorder and Distro POBox 14636 Gainesville, FL 32604-4636) This is the hands down indie music sampler of the year. 33 bands on one disc for \$3. Mostly FL bands (AAA, Less Than Jake, Hot Water Music, I Spoke, Clairmee) and a few from out of town (Man or Astroman, Action Patrol, Swank). Wide

diversity, no clunkers, approx 9 cents a band. Like, what the fuck are ya waiting for?!?! P.S. it's a joint project from No Idea and Toybox Records. - Des Jr.

BURNT AND BENT (Burnt Sienna Records, 207 Powhatan, Columbus Ohio, 43204) Burnt Sienna is yet to let me down with a release, and this comp is a culmination of all their brilliance. This is beyond adjectives; however, "amazing," "incredible," and "I can die now since I've heard this" did come to mind. Buy this or forever consider your life empty. Why am I this excited over a compilation disc? Well, only because there is not a bad track here among the twenty-five on the roster, and there is honestly something for everyone. The collection opens with the labels' latest darlings, the Mudflap Girls from Venus, and they deserve the opening billing. They set the tone for this impeccable release. I do not have enough room to list all the bands worth hearing here, but Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments, Moody Jackson and Econothugs will just blow you away. Not to mention some of my favorites like My White Bread Mom, Pet UFO, Morning Shakes and KnumSkull. If that's not enough, there are a few selections from bands that are just bubbling under the surface of success, especially Corm, which is a DC-area band that has some material out on Dischord, and are truly something to watch. Look, go buy this, what are you waiting for? - Rich Q.

THE CALIFORNIA TAKEOVER...LIVE (Victory Records, P.O. Box 146546, Chicago IL 60614) Compilation discs were seemingly created for underground musical genres like punk or metal. Although an old D.I.Y. tool, comp albums still do a fine job of promoting a number of bands with a single



PLOW UNITED

Photo by Jim Testa

recording. *The California Takeover...Live* provides an excellent case in point, serving as a document of three bands – Strife, Earth Crisis and Snapcase – captured live during a April '96 performance at the Whisky in L.A. The dozen songs offered here, four from each band, showcase a style of thrash metal that I had thought long gone from the scene. The trio of bands knock off enough molten riffs and sonic percussion to literally bring down the roof. Of the three, I'd have to personally give Earth Crisis the edge, if only for the strength of their lyrics and singer Karl's enormous vocal gymnastics. Strife and Snapcase flex plenty of musical muscle, as well, and all three bands are worth looking up on their own. – Reverend K.

CLOSER THAN YOU Florida Ska Volume One (Moon, POBox 1412 Cooper Station NYC, NY 10276) A wide ranging comp that celebrates the depth & diversity of the burgeoning FLA ska scene. Bands featured include Magadog, Less Than Jake, Skahumbug, Blue City Kings, and Baccone Dolce. The styles range from punk ska, goof ska, lounge ska, latin ska (skalsa?) and ska ska. This shit is hugely popular down here (it must have something to do with this oppressive sunshine) and this 70+ min disc represents the atmosphere quite handily. - Des Jr.

DAD, I CAN'T BREATHE (Creep Records) - Ok there's a band on here called Super Hi-5 and they do a song called "Period". This is the reason why you want to get this vinyl only (hot pink) release. Plus it has cool tunes by Wally, Third Year Freshmen, Plow United, Halflings, and the Pins. Comes with a neat zine like booklet with all the info and fun photo gallery needed with every punk rock compilation these days. - Dave T.

DIVERSIFIED CHAOS (MotherBox, 60 Denton Ave East Rockaway, NY 11518) This comp showcases 22 punk bands from the US, Canada, Italy, Finland, the UK, and Japan. Except for a few of the bands, most lean toward the melodic side of punk. Stand out tracks by Clockwise, Grey Spikes, Lifeball and Halo Boots just to name a few. Probably one of the better comps I've heard in quite some time. - Rick K.

THE EXCURSION COMPILATION (Excursion, Box 20224, Seattle, WA, 98102) This sampler runs the full spectrum of punk – from hardcore to popcore – exemplifying what Excursion has to offer. Although it consists mostly of previously released stuff, there are new tracks from Jayhawker, nineironspifire (ex-Undertow), Lit and Jough Dawn Baker. 16 songs for \$3 ppd. That's less than 19 cents a song. You can't beat that with a bat. - Shawn S.

FORECAST VOL. I (Excursion, PO Box 20224, Seattle WA 98102) This disc contains four bands (on Excursion, I think): Red Rocket, Artless Motives, State Rte 522, and Whatever. Sixteen songs of some of the most depressing melodic/emo punk songs I've ever heard. Sniff, sniff... I promised myself I wouldn't cry. - Rich H.

HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU (Hopeless Records, P.O. Box 7495, Van Nuys Ca. 91409) I expected great things from this compilation, but was a little disappointed after the first few songs. Guttermouth stumbled through their opening track and Digger was too much of a Weston cover band for my liking. However, just as I was about to write this disc off, the Nobodys came on and turned things around. This Colorado band changed the complexity of the disc, for from that point on the mood became far more aggressive, angry and energetic. Along with the Nobodys, 88 Fingers Louie do a more than flattering tribute to the Misfits with "Night of the Living Dead", and Funeral Oration had me up and breaking things in my apartment. Other worthwhile moments appear compliments of the Bollweevils and White Kaps. In the end, it was a good representation of Hopeless Record which looks like its anything but its name. There's some good stuff on here that is well worth the \$3.99 asking price. Actually, the bonus track alone is worth that, for you will never see "Grease" in the same light again. - Rich Q.

HURRICANE cassette sampler - (Opulence, PO Box 2071, Wilmington NC 28402) This latest compilation cassette from the Wilmington, NC scene-meisters at Opulence includes tracks from Railroad Earth (interviewed in this issue) and Tommie Grizzz (whose tour diary is also in this issue) as well as such up 'n' coming alt.rock acts as Tricky The Cosmonaut and Ink Pot Monkey. The audio quality varies somewhat from track to track, but you can't beat the price – just write the above address and tell them you want some "free stuff" and they'll send you this tape and whatever else they have around (stickers, flyers, etc.) - Jim T.

IRV 2 (Blind Records - PO Box 336, North Chili, NY 14514) This comp CD contains a eclectic mix of "modern rock." This means that the CD is mostly

composed of bands which are trying real hard to sound like U2 or Rancid or any number of numerous other ultra successful artists. I was becoming increasingly bored towards the end of this CD, when the proverbial "diamond in the rough," rolled into my ears. This came in the form of the band Hurtin Buccaroos. Their two tracks on this CD are really the only ones original, heavy and exciting enough to stand out. The Hurtin Buckaroo's are a mix of Chili Pepperish funk metal and weird synth music, with real errie and throaty, female (I think) vocals. As I stated above, there is not much else on here to interest me. If you like "modern rock," which sounds suspiciously like rehashed 80s rock, then you may enjoy the bulk of this CD; if not, I would just skip this one and contact the only interesting band on here, The Hurtin Buckaroo's directly at PO Box 64 - Larchmont - NY 0538-0064. - Chris D.

JABBERJAW: *Pure Sweet Hell* (Mammoth Records, The Broad Street Building, 101 B. Street Carrboro, NC 27510) This is a compilation to help celebrate and benefit this fairly legendary L.A. club that saw many, many cool acts rock its tiny walls. There is an outstanding line-up on this disc, and the music is both varied and amazing, with most of these tracks being previously unreleased, if you dig that kind of thing. I really loved this all the way through, but some standouts include the pure adrenaline rush of Fitz of Depression ("Burn It Down"), the swank surf-punk of the Hi-Fives, the Bomboras, and the coolest dorks on this or any other solar system, Man or Astroman? Mary Lou Lord turns up with another solid, tear-jerking piece, as well as the indefinably hip sounds of Brainiac and godheadSilo. Look, go buy this ok? Besides, it's a benefit - you'll feel great about yourself for doing it!! - Rich Q.

LAND OF DIRT (Feedlot Music Co-op, Po Box 2850, Iowa City, IA 52244) This comp features 20 Iowa city area bands. Most of the bands on this disc play quirky art-damaged music; some sound cool, while some of the songs are so meandering they become annoying. I wonder if there isn't that much to do out there in Iowa, that a lot of these folks just smoke-out and start jammin' out tunes, or if the person who put this comp together was going for



Kenyata, INKPOT MONKEY

Photo by Jim T.

bands who sound alike. Well what ever the case, the result is just plain weird. - Rick K.

MAX'S KANSAS CITY 1976 (ROIR 611 Broadway Suite 411 NYC, NY 10012) I had this on vinyl back in the day, now it serves as a cute little time capsule of some punk precursors. Featuring Wayne County, Cherry Vanilla, Pere Ubu and Suicide. It is good that they threw on 4 bonus tracks, but it would have been so much better if they had included some liner notes explaining the attitude and a bit of history of Max's scene and why it was so important, historically. - Des Jr.

THE NERVOUS CENTER EXPECTATION SABOTAGE 1 (The Nervous Center, 4612 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago, IL 60625) An eclectic collection of weirdness from the Nervous Center. The Nervous Center is a coffee house in Chicago, run by a DJ from radio station WZRD (88.3 FM in Chicago).

Chicago's free-form, non-mainstream radio station. And the music at the coffee house follows the WZRD tradition. Music featured there covers a wide range of DIY efforts from unknown musicians. This CD is the first in a planned series featuring the music of these performers. As such, the music ranges from freaky experimental stuff to quiet ambient, to twisted folk to twisted rock to synth doodling, and everything in-between. This CD is a perfect disc to help you ease into more adventurous music. - Paul S.

OI! GREATEST HITS Volume One (Dojo Records, FDR Station POB 684 NYC, NY 10150) Rocking ramalama from a batch of Oi!riginal British punks circa late 70's-mid 80's. A wide variety of opinions are expressed from nationalism, politicism, antifascism and sarcasm. Bands include Sham 69, 4 Skins, Blitz, Cockney Rejects and Angelic Upstarts. This music gained a rightfully bonehead reputation, but this comp flinches not at questionable mentalities and demonstrates a fair spectrum of personalities, all delivered in raging 4/4 time. Valuable history. - Des Jr.

POGO, STRUT, SLAM, SWIVEL & MOSH (Devil Doll, 2533 E Broadway, Ste. 8, Long Beach, CA 90803) This is smoking 65+ min modern punk digislab. With NOFX, Everready, Screw 32, Wizo and 21 others. Mostly unreleased! All trax are hi-quality with the notable exception of 16's sludge-o-pathic closer. The song might be better in a different context, but following the 24 previous hi-octane blasts it ends this LP with a big clunk. - Des Jr.

ROOTS, BRANCH & STEM: LIVING TRADITION IN SKA! (Stubborn Records, 504 Grand Street #F52, NY, NY 10002-4101) I've only heard of one or two of the bands (Skinnerbox, Slackers) that appear on this 17 band compilation. This CD spent a lot of time on my stereo - brought back that early 80's UK Specials sound. It's tough for me to find reference points since I'm not that familiar with the ska scene - but it's sure to get your feet tapping to the beat and it's a lot of fun. - Tom B.

SKA-VILLE UK (Dojo Records, PO Box 684, NYC 10150) Strong British ska-polation of previously released material from such acts like Bad Manners, Judge Dread, The 4-Skins and the Nutty Boys (ex-Madness.) They keep it a lot closer to the root than most U.S. ska these days and that makes it all the more cooler to me. Skank it up! - Des Jr.

THE SPANDEX EXPERIMENT (Double Deuce Records) - What a great idea. Have punk bands revive classic 80's metal tunes. Really funny and actually quite enjoyable. Of course the originals are classics of their own, hearing No Fraud do Scorpions' "Rock You Like A Hurricane", the Nobody's doing AC/DC's "You Shook Me All Night Long", and Sinkhole doing Judas Priest's "You Got Another Thing Coming". Fucking great. Get this now! - Dave T.

ZAGGA ROCK FESTIVAL (Marijan Ogrinc, Lecnikarjeva 12, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia) A collection of performances from the first annual festival, held in the former Yugoslavia, which features 25 bands. They all seem to have pretty much a late 70s garage punk style. At first it was kind of cool, but after a short time, every track started to sound alike. A good compilation should have a variety of musical styles within a particular thematic framework. Too much of one thing gets boring. - Paul S.

## BOOKS

KALEIDOSCOPE EYES - *Psychedelic Rock From the 60's To The 90's* by Jim DeRogatis (Citadel Underground) I need to preface this review by noting that the author is not only one of my closest friends, but also that he started as a rock critic right here at Jersey Beat. So anything I say about his book will be tainted by both friendship and pride. That said, *Kaleidoscope Eyes* is a whirlwind tour of popular music from that moment in a Swiss chemistry lab when LSD was first invented right through some of today's latest tastemakers. Supposedly a history of "psychedelic rock," the book goes off on tangents that will have some purists shaking their heads. Sure, the Beatles, the Byrds, Jimi Hendrix and Jefferson Airplane were, each in their own way, "psychedelic." But Pere Ubu? The Feelies? Jesus & Mary Chain? DeRogatis stretches the definition of "psychedelic" about as far as it will go, loosely defining it as any music informed or influenced by the mind-altering affects of certain drugs. In practice, Jim manages to talk about just about any band he likes, but that's fine; the onetime editor of "Reasons For Living" fanzine has always been at his best when gushing about his favorite records, and he gets to do that at length in this book. It's especially fun to read DeRogatis' take on such familiar icons as the Beatles and Stones, strictly from the perspective of their psychedelic recordings, or trace how the course of popular music was irrevocably changed by the introduction of LSD. Given DeRo's take on history, the evolution of the British Invasion from the Beatles' "Strawberry Fields Forever" to Pink

Floyd's "My White Bicycle" to the wretched excess of 70's prog-rock monsters like Yes makes perfect sense for the first time. *Kaleidoscope Eyes* is a fun romp through the last 30 years of pop music, filled with characters both familiar and obscure, all involved in the serious business of having fun while expanding their (and our) minds. - Jim T.

PLEASE KILL ME - *The Uncensored Oral History of Punk*, by Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain (Grove Press) It's not much of a stretch to say that according to this "oral history," punk rock was nothing more than a conspiracy by a handful of New York junkies and homosexuals to recreate popular music in their own twisted image. Of course, to a certain extent, that's true... but that's almost besides the point.

In an age where gossip outsells hard news (on TV, in the tabloid press, and even in a lot of magazines and fanzines,) it was inevitable that someone would redefine "history" as "gossip" and publish a book about it. That's what *Please Kill Me* amounts to: gossip as history, as pasted together from old magazine interviews, half-remembered conversations, and the authors' own experiences.

The book traces the history of "Punk" from Andy Warhol's Factory and the Velvet Underground, to L.A. for a quick visit with the Doors, through Detroit (for the MC5 and Stooges,) back to NYC and the New York Dolls, Patti Smith, and the whole CBGB/Max's Kansas City punk scene of the late 70's, then off to England for the birth of the Sex Pistols.

Yes, McCain and McNeil's point of view is narcissistic and myopic; lots of other artists and scenes contributed to the birth of punk. But if you - like the authors - define punk as "sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll" (in roughly that order of importance,) you'll probably enjoy this book. There aren't quite as many classic anecdotes as you'd think, given the juicy subject matter (and the book's obsession with the sex lives and drug habits of its subjects,) but its scrapbook format makes it perfect for modern attention spans. The rock fan in me enjoyed the book almost as much as the old-school newspaperman in me found its gutter-journalism approach annoying. But I guess if you're going to write about the Velvets or Johnny Thunders, a little bit of sleaze goes with the territory. - Jim T.

THE MUSICIAN'S GUIDE TO TOURING and PROMOTION, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition (Musician, 1515 Broadway, NYC 10036) This annually-updated industry guide is now available on diskette, and the computer version is even handier than the standard magazine version you can find on newsstands. There's tons of data here for the aspiring band or indie label, everything from addresses and phone numbers for the A&R departments at hundreds of major and indie labels, to extensive listings for press and radio. Going on tour? Click on a city you'll be visiting, and you find a listing of clubs you might be able to play. Once you get the gig, click on the city again and find the addresses and phone numbers for local radio and press contacts. Want to put your own record out? The Guide lists tape and disc manufacturers. There's also listings for music conferences and conventions, and music-related Internet sites.

The computer version makes sorting through all this data very simple, lets you print out your own lists and reports (even mailing labels,) and organizes everything so even the computer illiterate should be able to point-and-click and find exactly what they want.

Not all the information is perfect, of course; I found a few mistakes just under the NJ listings, as well as a several glaring omissions. And this kind of information changes all the time; clubs open and close, newspapers and magazines start up or fold, people change jobs. One nice touch is that the system lets you annotate and edit existing entries, so if you do turn up discrepancies, you can fix them and save the correct info.

The *Musician's Guide* won't help you if you're booking your first punk tour and looking for basements and VFW halls to play; if that's what you're after, try *Book Your Own Fuckin' Life* or the DIY columns in *Punk Planet* and *MRR*. But if you're a working band looking to tour or get signed, or an indie label marketing new releases, the *Musician's Guide To Touring* is easy to use, very flexible, and chock full of useful names and addresses. - Jim T.



# Editor's Choice

It looks like a crappy little half-sized photocopied zine, with an ugly photocopied graphic on the cover, but **SHAT UPON** is still the best punkzine I've run across in ages. It's apparently put together by a guy named Rusty, and how he ever got to be so sarcastic, smart, and well-informed growing up in Missoula, Montana is indeed a mystery. His editorials are models of punk-rock proficiency - literate, opinionated, and sensible. There's a band-by-band rundown of the entire Missoula scene that's so well written and descriptive that I didn't even mind the absence of photos (and I usually HATE scene reports without band photos.) Then Rusty reviews each and every columnist at Maximum Rock N Roll (I can't believe he actually reads them all -- I gave up trying to do that years ago) and definitely pinpoints each one's strengths and weaknesses. There's also a hilarious account of a bizarre quickie that Rusty enjoyed in Finland that's sexier than most porn you'll ever read, and a piece on cool things you can do in Missoula to make it through the winter. (Rusty, c/o Heligate, PO Box 9081, Missoula MT 59802, \$1)

The latest issue of San Diego's **GENETIC DISORDER** has fun with an old Eighties bugaboo, Satanism. It's hard to believe that parents once reacted with media-fueled hysteria at the slightest hint of "Satan" creeping into their teenaged childrens' lives, but the first-person accounts collected here (including an especially colorful one from the zine's editor, Larry) provide an entertaining (and enlightening) reminder of that ridiculous era when so-called experts were quick to label "every metal head, stoner, skater, and punk kid as a Satanic dabbler." A lengthy reviews section provides a fix for music junkies, but the best part of GD#14 is the wickedly witty calendar that brings you a daily reminder of some Satanic happening (April 24, 1995: Proctor & Gamble removes its moon-and-stars trademark after a nationwide rumor brands it a satanic symbol; August 20, 1948: Robert Plant born.) (\$3 to PO Box 15237, San Diego CA 92175)

A couple years ago, Sam LaHoz was breaking into the scene taking photos for Jersey Beat. Now he's putting us to shame with his gorgeous new zine, **SCRAWL**. The interviews focus on a fairly standard cross-section of major label and indie rock (Jesus Lizard, Bouncing Souls, Texas Is The Reason, Halcion, etc.) but it's Sam's photos - blown up real BIG - that makes this a must-see. (PO Box 205, NY NY 10012, \$2)

You always know what you're going to get with every issue of **SUBURBAN VOICE**: informative interviews with a diverse collection of punk and hardcore bands, great photos, a reliable reviews section, and a bonus 7 inch. Issue 39 includes chats with Churn, Doc Hopper, Girls Against Boys, Lifetime, Parasites, Propagandhi, and lots more, and the 7 inch has tunes from Jon Cougar Concentration Camp, Tub, and Fed Up. (PO Box 2746, Lynn MA 01903, \$4)

All fanzine reviews by Jim Testa unless otherwise noted.

**132 FANZINE #1** (Jon Collins, 132 Smull Ave., W Caldwell NJ 07006, \$2) Kinda messy anything-goes punkzine. The editors poke fun at the Misfits, tsk tsk over homelessness, do a mail interview with Plow United, talk with Blanks 77, and lots more. They won't win any awards for originality (or neatness) but they certainly seem to have their hearts and heads in the right place.

**BALLBUSTER #2** (PO Box 58368, Louisville KY 40268, \$3.95) You want metal? Excuse me, "Hard Music?" (Well, it's better than "Action Rock," which is what the majors are calling it these days.) Ballbuster covers everything from dinosaurs like Iron Maiden to pop metal acts like GWAR, to hardcore/rap fusionaires like Stuck Mojo, plus all the underground grind, deathmetal, industrial, and hardcore you could want. Ballbuster even has international scene reports. There's tons of text, editorials, lots of smelly publicity stills, and huge album and demo review sections. Headbangers will, you should excuse the expression, have a ball reading this one.

**BIG TAKEOVER #39** (249 Eldridge St. #14, NYC 10002, \$4) Reviewing The Big Takeover is a little like reviewing the phone book. For one thing, it's almost as thick, and it's every bit as much an institution (at least around my house.) For #39, Jack interviews Guided By Voices, Cocteau Twins, Lush, Sebadoh, Electrafication, Lotion, Boo Radleys, Lotion, the Wipers, and a few others, plus Jack and his staff's encyclopedic record reviews and editorials, live reviews, and Jack's list of "200 great albums by 200 great artists."

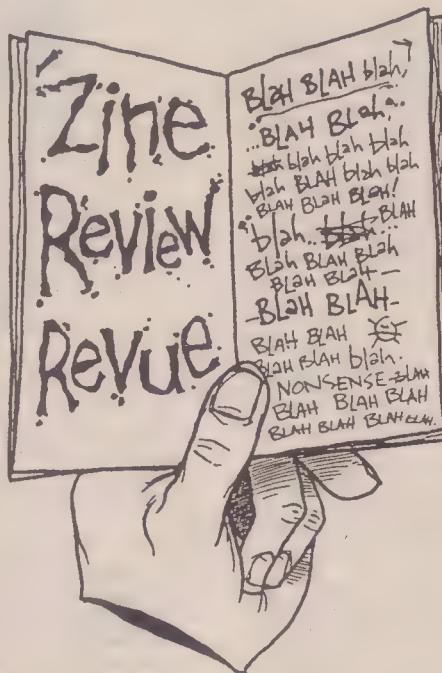
**BITE ME #5** (6038 Hayes Ave #1A, Los Angeles, CA \$1.50) You can just tell that the folks behind this enjoy what they do. Your basic reviews and interviews (this issue has the Wrens, Dystopia 1, Greta and some show reviews). The reviews are broken down to Major & Indy label categories, with a separate section for demos and encompass a broad range of musical styles. This is off to a good beginning - and I just love the name. - Tom B.

**BLINK #13** (PO Box 20043, New York NY 10014, \$2) Editor Fia has relocated from Miami to NYC, although her zine still looks and feels pretty much the same. Weird

artwork, funny stories (this one has a true-life adventure in babysitting,) tips for the suicidal, and interviews with Railroad Jerk, the Smears, and FF.

**BRUSHBACK #5** (139 Sunnyside Ave., Waterbury CT 06708, \$6) Great photos on glossy paper, coupled with a curmudgeonly wit. It's not much of a formula but it's worked for Dave Brushback (nee Dave Run It) for a long time now. Besides the very cute Chixdiggit, you get a bunch of unknown Connecticut bands (two of whom, Nevertheless and Explodee, on an accompanying 7 inch.) Dave's irascible sense of humor, and Dave's Guide to Manly Stuff. Guaranteed to be a collector's item so get 'em before Dave actually sells a few and runs the price up.

**CHANGE ZINE #8** (Patrick West, 45 West Ave #4, Norwalk CT 06854, \$2) The zine that proves sports and punk do mix. The issue starts off surly, with editor Pat threatening to dismantle any kickboxer types who bump him in the pit. Then it's on to the columns, interviews (Voorhees, Pist, Kiss It Goodbye, Seven Years War,) and this issue's sports feature, Seaweed ranks the Sonics. Comes with a bonus 7 inch with Today Is The Day and The Automatic Few.



**CHINESE BOB #2** (PO Box 500233, San Antonio TX 78280, \$1) Column and rants, a guide to cross-dressing movies (cool!), Scooby Doo, comix, and reviews. Nice mix of stuff.

**CRAZY RHYTHMS #1** (PO Box 9146, Denver CO 80209, \$1) Jesse Fuchs of Geekcore picks up where Mykel Board left off with his old Nothing But Record Reviews zine. Crazy Rhythms is nothin' but reviews... but not just new releases, old stuff too. Think of this as a mini-zine version of the Trouser Press Guide. Jesse wants this zine to be a resource "for when you go down to the record store and want to buy something." Or you can match his opinion of an old record against yours. Fun, and well-written.

**DAMN #10** (5 Franklin Blvd. Somerset NJ 08873, \$1) Mick Hale's compendium of all things cyber, techno, and trance. A piece on Orbital is the centerpiece, plus the usual reviews and a short story.

**DORK 'ZINE #6 \$1** (7020 Grand Canyon Dr. #117, Austin TX 78752) A fun read in 1/2 size format put out by some 19 & 20 year old college students. Interviews with the Crumbs, The Rehabs, Mixelpicks, and Ferd Mert. Grumblings on how the scene sucks, how jocks have taken over punk shows, girls fucking guys over, underwear creep and school sucking. A quick easy read. - Tom B.

**DWGSHT ZINE #8** (PO Box 701, Annapolis MD 21404, \$1) Editor Alex, an Illinois boy, begins life anew in the Navy town of Annapolis with this issue. Politics and punks in equal doses, with columns, reviews, and two off-the-wall articles that may have started out as somebody's homework - a report on the Attica prison riot and a piece on the assassination of President McKinley.

**EYE #8** (153 E. Lindsay St. #108, Greensboro NC 27401, \$3.95) A hodgepodge of esoterica - everything from a look at the dark side of Mother Teresa to an appreciation of the kitschy sci-fi flick *Angry Red Planet*. Internet plagiarism (and what you can do to try & protect yourself,) shrunken heads, collectibles, cyber stuff, and some reviews. Good to leaf through if you're into news of the weird.

**THE FLASHING ASTONISHER #7** (113 Fleetwood Lane, Minoa NY 13116, \$2) Lots of letters and a few columns, and then it's mostly reviews.

**FOURBALL FANZINE #3** (183 Angell St., Providence RI 02906, \$2) First of all, congratulations to editors Brian and Emma on the birth of their baby. Who says zine geeks can't lead real lives? Inside this hefty all-newsprint issue, you get Six Finger Satellite, Drop Dead, Aaron Muntz from The Probe zine, a guide to cover bands, a guide to screen printing, and lots more.

**GREEDY BASTARD #13** (PO Box 1014, Yonkers NY 10704, \$2) Wacky Bill Florio is back with his usual wealth of sick jokes and corny wisecracks, the cream of NYC's scum rock scene, even an interview with a squeegee punk (a homeless person who washes car windshields for spare change.) Tasteless, rude, and - of course - a million laughs.

**GREEN MEANS GO! #4** (PO Box 6278, Hoboken NJ 07030, \$2) Mike & Jen return with another issue. Mike visits a gallery exhibit on counterculture media and waxes poetic about the joys of listening to the radio. Then there are interviews with 1-4-5's, Sicko, and Tub, plus a big reviews section. I like their motto too: "Remember, there are no bad words, just bad people."

**I DEFY #4** (Casey Boland, 721 Corlies Ave., W Allenhurst NJ 07711, \$2) "Who I am is defined by what I create," writes Casey, nicely summarizing the need to zine in his opening editorial. Good interviews that go beyond the usual questions with Enkindel, and Still Life, plus lots of personal rants. Good reading.

**INNER MUSCLE #5** (PO Box 8681, Missoula MT 59807, \$2) Three writers explain why they love AC/DC, the joys of driving, columns, interviews with Medicine and Steel Pole Bathtub, lots of reviews, and some clever graphics. Lots to read and a nice mix of opinion and commentary.

**INSIGHT #16** (PO Box 125, Farmington MI 48332, \$3.95) A top notch

who thought making fart noises was the epitome of wit. It's not every zine that can poke fun at Superman, the Oklahoma bombing, and the FBI in one issue. Insight is full of bad jokes, corny quotes, a reviews section that covers greasy porn paperbacks along Maximum Rock N Roll, and still manages to come up with quality stuff like this issue's Killdozer tour diary and its usual first-rate reviews section.

**THE INTERNATIONAL #1** (14 Kelly Rd., Carmel NY 10512, \$1) A ska zine that makes it clear it wants no part of racist, nazi, or nationalist skinhead-ism. They interview Blanks 77 and Johnny Too Bad, but wander off the Oi! tip too by talking to Showcase Showdown. The International Dictionary will clue you in to all that hip lingo the kids talk at shows these days.

## BRUSHBACK



**IT'S ALIVE #14** (PO Box 6326, Oxnard CA 93031, \$2) An old school hardcore zine, and I mean that in the best way: Great photos, interviews with hardcore bands, and classic flyers up the wazoo. Kudos to Fred Hammer for keeping the faith.

**LUNATIC FRINCE (formerly Girl Germs) #1** (11 Hathaway Dr., Princeton Jct., NJ 08550-1664 \$1 & 2 stamps) A personal zine with a piece on inspired rants on rock star ODs, poetry, a tale of how one girl putting out a zine did not want to show her dad the 1st issue since it had an article on masturbation. Also, an article on why schools should not force gym, riot girl stuff and excerpts from the book Witch Baby. A good start with a lot of heart. - Tom B.

**MIND TOYLETTE #70** (PO Box 6132, Long Island City NY 11106, \$1) An interview with the NY ska group the Toasters and some column rants make up most of this slim, sloppy-looking zine.

**MOTION SICKNESS #2** (6221 Delmar Blvd. #202 Rear, St. Louis MO 63130, \$2) Lots of punk and hardcore interviews: Blanks 77, Vandals, Guttermouth, Gaunt, Queers, Rudiments, Royal Crown Revue, and lots, lots more, all on nice smearable newsprint to get your hands black.

**MUCKRAKER #4** (PO Box 1138, Notre Dame IN 46556, \$1.50) A mini-zine filled with stories, poems, observations, antique photos, and opinions about South Bend, Indiana.

**MUTANT RENEGADE ZINE #7 \$1** (P.O. Box 3445, Dayton, OH 45401) Stuff on the communications bill, too much bullshit on a spoof of the editors, Laurie Anderson interview, religion and politics article, an article about a pending job loss at a public radio station, and excellent reviews. They tend to hate heavy metal, so lets support them. - Tom B.

**NERVOUS BREAKDOWN Vol 1, Issue 2** (9379 Tartan View Dr., Fairfax, VA 2232- \$1.25) These guys are definitely into Ska, but there's

more to this than that. Included is an overview of the Skinhead movement, form the mods to today's Straight Edgers, and an interview with Nathan Strejcek of Teen Idles/Youth Brigade fame. This is a 28 page half size zine that the editors are trying to keep free of charge and they're looking for advertisers to help them out.- Tom B.

**NO DEPRESSION** Vol.2, No. 1 (PO Box 31332, Seattle WA 98103, \$3.95) The Bible of the twang-core scene, which includes everything from classic country to trendy alt-rock acts like the V Roys and Lambchop. Well-written, good lookin', and packed with articles and reviews.

**OCULUS** Vol. V, Issue 3 (P.O. Box 148, Hoboken, NJ 07030 \$2) A most varied format with very professional writing throughout. Jim Glauner's Spinal Column is a personal piece about getting beat up as a kid and finding his outlet in punk music (I'm sure many of us can relate) Standard reviews, an interview with Kate Jacobs, a piece on the Wedding Present, and my favorite, a thorough in depth article on independent films and circumventing the latest Hollywood commercial dreck. - Tom B. #4 includes Hoboken's Baby Drowsy, the Peechees, and Appalachian Death Ride. Issue 5 includes Tommy Stinson's Perfect, Hoboken's Sexpod, Sebadoh, the Godrays, New Brunswick's Barbecue Bob, and the usuals.

**ONE QUIET VOICE** #2 (Thomas, PO Box 2172, Alameda CA 94501 \$1) This is a combination personal zine and record review zine, but even the reviews often spin off into rants or observations on some personal topic inspired by the music. The distinction with OQV is that editor Thomas isn't afraid to take his time and really get into a record; he'll spend a couple of pages talking about a 7 inch if he has something to say. What shines through all of this, from the diary-like rants to the rambling reviews, is Thomas' obvious love of music.

**OUTLET** #4 (4704 Village Bridge Apts., 98 Oak St., Lindenwold NJ 08021, \$2) This zine is primarily an outlet for editor Steven DiSebastian's weird comic strips, although it also includes several first-person adventures, like Steven's jury duty and a trip diary. At 72 pages, there's plenty to read, and his comics are pretty cool.

**PMS #7** (Rik, 51-55 Waterloo Rd., London SE1 8TX ENGLAND, \$4 airmail) seems to be London's answer to Outpunk, a queer punk zine. There's an introduction to a queer club night the editor's involved with, a chat with a gay Japanese punk, a reprint of Matt (Outpunk) Woben-smith's tirade against MRR (and editor Rik's response,) and a reviews section (which seems more interesting than usual, if only because it's from a Brit's point of view.)

**POCKET FULL OF CHUMP CHANGE** #3 (29 Mailloux Ter., Dracut MA 01826, \$2) Punk with a capital P. Gotta love articles with titles like "Things That Have Happened To Me That Sucked Moose Cock Concerning Girls" and a shit-list called "Human Turd Dept." Interviews with New Bomb Turks, Mr T Experience, Sicko, and Bollweevils. Reviews, photos, etc.

**POPSMEAR** #9 (648 Broadway #806, NYC 10012, \$2) The usual PopSmear weirdness - travel tips to places you'd never go, disgusting sex articles, insider tips on getting past the bank and the IRS, "Cool Drugs You've Never Heard Of," and they even get around to some record and show reviews.

**R SQUARED** #2 (Rev. Keith Gordon, 826 Old Charlotte Pike E., Franklin TN 37064, \$2) Keith Gordon is one of my favorite record reviewers, so I'm glad he contributes to Jersey Beat. You can get an even bigger dose of the Reverend in his own zine, in which he dissects everything from Kevin Salem to Steve Earle to the Sex Pistols reunion LP.

**RATIONAL INQUIRER** #7 (2050 W 56 St. #32-221, Hialeah FL 33016, \$2) lots of columns, classifieds, etc.) but RI usually has a few good features every issue and this one is no exception. There are interviews with Pansy Division, Neurosis, Damnation AD, Good Riddance, and a ton of bands, excellent DIY guides on the economics of doing a zine and releasing records, lots of cool photos, and a good reviews section.

**ROCKS OFF** #4 (PO Box 11194, Norfolk VA 23517, \$2) A pretty good punk zine with an emphasis on drunk punk bands and lifestyles. I got a

chuckle from "10 Reasons Why The Sex Pistols Didn't (Or Couldn't) Save Rock N Roll" (Reason #5: Roger Ebert), NYC scumrock gods The Stallions are interviewed, and the reviews have a nice feisty edge.

**THE SCHEME FANZINE** #2 (Dan, 10 Garvey Dr., Jamesburg NJ 08831, \$1) It's been two years since Scheme #1. Dan catches up somewhat with some interviews (Code 13, Darkside NYC, 25 Ta Life, Rejuvenate, plus some reviews, in a 1/2 sized format. Okay, but in all honesty, this doesn't look like two years' work.

**SHOELACE** #9 (PO Box 7952, W. Trenton NJ 08628 \$1.75) Erik Szantai and Bob Conrad's long-lived zine is back with lots of opinion columns, interviews with Boxcar and Erik's band Fats, and lots of reviews.

**SINGLET** #2 (PO Box 537, Phillipsburg NJ 08865, \$1) Julie is a junior in high school and this isn't a wrestling zine, it's mostly a personal zine by Julie and her friends about what's on their mind - dating, trendiness, and so on. Pretty messy layouts but everything has the ring of sincerity.

**SOUND VIEWS** #42 (96 Henry St. #5W, Brooklyn NY 11201, \$2) It's the NY Ska issue, so if you want to check out the city's booming ska scene, here's the place to start. Plus heavier stuff - H2O, Kiss It Goodbye, Halfman, and Candiria - and the usual columns and reviews. Always the best NYC scene coverage around.

**SPANK** #18 (1004 Rose Ave., Des Moines IA 50315, \$2) Tons of reviews, a couple of free stickers stuck inside the pages, and interviews with Sinkhole, Asian ska dude Michael Park, Squidboy, Squat, a long piece and insightful piece on D.C.'s Jawbox, and a chat with the nice folks at Cavity Search Records. Plenty to read.

**SUB-PULSE** #2 (2412 Slayback St., Urbana IL 61802, \$2) This suffers from the lookalike MRR/Punk Planet layout disease, and follows the same format: punk bands (Blanks 77, Squirtgun, the Johnnies,) rants (here imaginatively titled "Rants,") news (a rehash of the Leonard Peltier case,) comix, and an interesting and indepth chat with Alex of Dwgsht zine.

**SUBURBAN HOME** #5 (1750 30<sup>th</sup> St. Boulder CO 80301, \$1) I like the attitude - the Review Policy says "No hippie shit" (coming from Boulder, home of the Samples and Big Head Todd, that's an understandable precaution,) there's a guide to make sure you get out of the house, a piece on why Clueless is the best movie ever made, reviews, interviews with Down By Law and 30 Foot Tall, and tour advice from Becca Porter.

**TAILSPINS** (PO Box 1860, Evanston IL 60204 \$3) A MidWest staple, Tailspins cover Gen X culture, which means everything from TV trivia to cool bands (this issue has Gas Huffer and Boys Life,) along with whatever weirdness the staff dreams up. This issue includes Bigfoot sightings in Illinois/Missouri, the Rev. Jim Jones, Northwest garage rock, and a good reviews section.

**TAKING DOPE** #2 (available from See Hear, \$4) This is Dee Dee Ramone's new zine, although I use the word "zine" loosely. It's basically a stream-of-consciousness, hand-lettered diary, printed on one side of the page, with amateurish drawings and cut 'n paste art. You might think spending a night out on the town with Dee Dee Ramone and some of his chums would be fun - or at least interesting. Think again.

**THE TEEN SCENE** #55 (34 Highland Cross #2, Rutherford NJ 07070, \$2) Blair Buscareno's ongoing obsession with all things garage continues. This ish includes the Drags, Devil Dogs, Omega Men, Nomads, scads of reviews, and a plea for a return to brightly colored shirts. (Gotta dig out some of my old paisleys from The Dive days.) If you're into 6T's retro stuff, you need this zine.

**UNDER THE VOLCANO** #8 (PO Box 236, Nesconset NY 11767, \$2) Besides the indispensable Long Island hardcore/hard music coverage, this issue includes a clever idea - industrial noisemongers John Bergin and Dystopia One's Baz Turd interviewing each other. Continuing on the industrial tip, there are also interviews with Controlled Bleeding and Chase (of Re-Constriction Records,) plus a piece on the B-movie studio Troma (home of The Toxic Avenger,) and the usual reviews and columns.

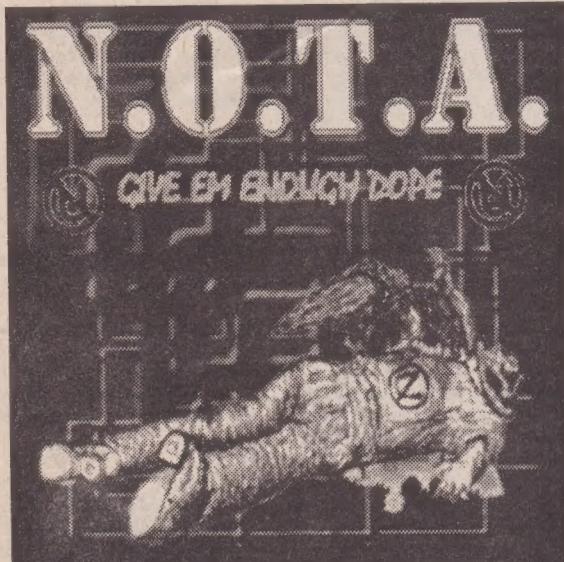
**UNDERBELLY** (409 Washington St. #221, Hoboken NJ 07030, \$1) Hometown zine in Hoboken, with rants about the local parking situation, things to do in town, and lots of ads from local shops, haircutters, etc. I'd like to see more local music covered, though, Hoboken could use it.

**UNDERDOG ZINE #16** (2252 N Elston Ave. 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl., Chicago IL 60614, \$2) The newsletter for Chicago's oldest punk collective continues to serve as a clearinghouse for the area's punk intellectuals. You'll find everything from a treatise on the Unabomber's manifesto to a long think piece on the meaning of work, an appreciation of Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture to an article on ska.

**UNDERGROUND ZINE SCENE** (John Ridge, 316 E Main Street, Sebewsing MI 48759, \$1) Nothing fancy, just reviews of zines. A good guide if you're addicted, or just looking for a place to send your new demo tape to get reviewed.

**USELESS #2** (200 E. 16<sup>th</sup> St. #12G, NYC 10003; \$2) New but every good NYC hardcore zine in the MRR/Punk Planet style. Interviews with Nobodys, Goods, StillSuit, and LES Stitches, a very informative interview with a hardcore booking agent about how bands can get shows, a cool photo gallery, and lots of reviews.

**VIOLIN OUTBREAK #13** (Tony Arena, 321 W 16 St #2W, NYC 10011, \$2) Tiny print and cut and paste layouts make this a little tough on the eyes, but there's plenty of punk and hardcore in here, including everything you'd ever want to know about the Revillos.



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**WRITING ON THE WALL (WOW) #1** (Unseen Press, PO Box 23, Valhalla NY 10595, \$3) A half size zine full of reproductions of 'tagging' - the signatures of graffiti artists - which the editor found along the Harlem Line tracks north of White Plains, NY.

**ZOOM BEER & MUSIC MAGAZINE #6** (106 Merrill Ave., Lowell, MA 01850 \$2) An interesting combo - beer & music - that I have not yet seen done. Brew Pubs in MA and NH are visited and in depth interviews which cover the brew process, beer varieties, and foods served are included. The band interview lean toward shitty heavy metal bands like Bathorde and metal crossover acts like Merauder, but the review section covers a wide range of musical styles from large national acts to local area bands ... everything from Willie Nelson to the Business. The "Swill Through" column that knocks shitty brews is my fave; Busch Beer does indeed suck big time. - Tom B.

**ZUM #9** (PO Box 4449, Berkeley CA 94704, \$2) Cutting edge indie rock (Modest Mouse, Boyracer, Prolapse, The Sea And Cake) takes center stage. Travel diaries, the joys of bowling, and lots of reviews. Smart and good looking offset zine from former JB contributor George Chen and his sister Yvonne.

**ZUZU'S PETALS #1** (Guy LeCharles Gonzalez, 182 Griffith St. #5, Jersey City NJ 07307 \$1) Fiction, poems, politics, Tupac Shakur, and *It's A Wonderful Life*.



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This is my former roommate, Tracy, who wants to help out my little record label by offering up a full color naked photograph of herself with every purchase from Probe Records. If interested just mention this ad. If you prefer I can send photos of some ugly naked dudes instead and free stickers.

## "Another Fucking Comp..." 7in. (\$3ppd.)

Fuckface, Charles Bronson, Plaight, Your Mother, and Yogurt - two of the Hickey guys.

Coming soon: "Seven inches of Sensitive Male", an acoustic split with Matty Luv and Max, a real tearjerker. / Better Than Your Hand 7", an excellent female-fronted SF punk band / Mental Pigmy Whopper Breath split 7" / and Probe #6 later this year.

I will be spending the next three and half months of this Summer driving 18 wheel death machines up and down California's scenic HWY 5, night and day, seven days a week. (Got to pay for these ads somehow). While I'm away a fellow alcoholic, unemployed member of the N.C.H. named Kris Rockass will be donating her many talents towards keeping Probe Headquarters in operation -fightin' the MAN, offing PIGS, and collating Hickey booklets for the kids etc. A "big happy man" named Floyd will be doing the mailorder, ask him about his zine, Fat Punk.

# PROBE RECORDS

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The Bay Areas most monstrous and scary sounding band since Neurosis or Sleep. Actually, in real life they're young, pleasant, humanitarian types and the singer, Joe, works with little kids at an elementary school. He also does all the bands amazing artwork. However, there is a cop in the band (the academy just made him get his sleeve tattoos removed) but that's his problem. They have a really cute girl who plays a big mean-looking Warlock bass so that makes up for it. Ringwurm is dark and gloomy with an up beat so the kids can be evil and dance at the same time.

## Death to False Metal! (Vol. 1) CD (\$8ppd)

Punk bands cover '80's METAL! (Venom, Priest, Metallica, Maiden, Dio and more!) Slated for appearance: Fuckface, Limecell, Rudiments, Hickey, Pansey Division, Muscle Bitches, Lost Goat, Schlong, Narcissistic Freds, Your Mother, Bottom Feeders, Randy (Sweden), The Neighbors, K.P.F., One Eye Open, Ditch Bank Oakies, Slackjaw, Thunderchimp, Towel Bar Feeders, A Minor Forest and the Loudmouths. Coming soon, order now.

"This ain't no fucking melodic punk" comp. 7in (\$3ppd.) Ringwurm, Turboneger, the Loudmouths, Hickey, Whopper Breath, and Mensclub. I got about 100 left.

*the Probe*  
number five

The usual T&A, but it was the sight of my erect male member that scared away a large chickenshit distributor (not to mention a lot of penis sensitive and homophobic males) and left me with 500 extra copies for mailorder. Help me out. No age statement required (Fuck you PIG, go bust a real criminal. God forbid some kid gets a hard on or something). Full color cover, 100 pages, thick stock paper, cost more than a new car to get printed. "The Probe is one of the most indispensable zines of our time." -Jersey Beat "One of the most important zines in the world today." Thicker "It's only about the best damn zine I've read in my life... though it's filled with naked women what really makes this zine is the quality of the writing. Incredibly well done, good lay-outs, good interviews. The scribes at MRR could learn a thing or two from this guy." -Glossolalia "I'd much rather see a straight up porn zine... most of this is writing." MRR (\$4ppd.)

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